

ALL ABOUT HISTORY

The sultan strikes back
How Suleiman the Magnificent
seized Europe's heartlands



Hitler and the Occult

- Supernatural origins of Nazi hate
- Himmler's astrology obsession
- What did Hitler really believe?



**LAWMEN
OF THE
FRONTIER**
How the Wild
West was won

1918 SPANISH FLU DIARY

Louis XIV's sun trap
Why the Palace of Versailles
secured the Sun King's power



'BEAK MASK' EXPLAINED

**WORLD'S WORST
PLAGUES**



EXTREME BLACK DEATH CURES

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Future

Digital Edition

ISSUE 056



**Dan Jones vs
the Templars**

The author's quest to bust the
warrior monks' biggest myths

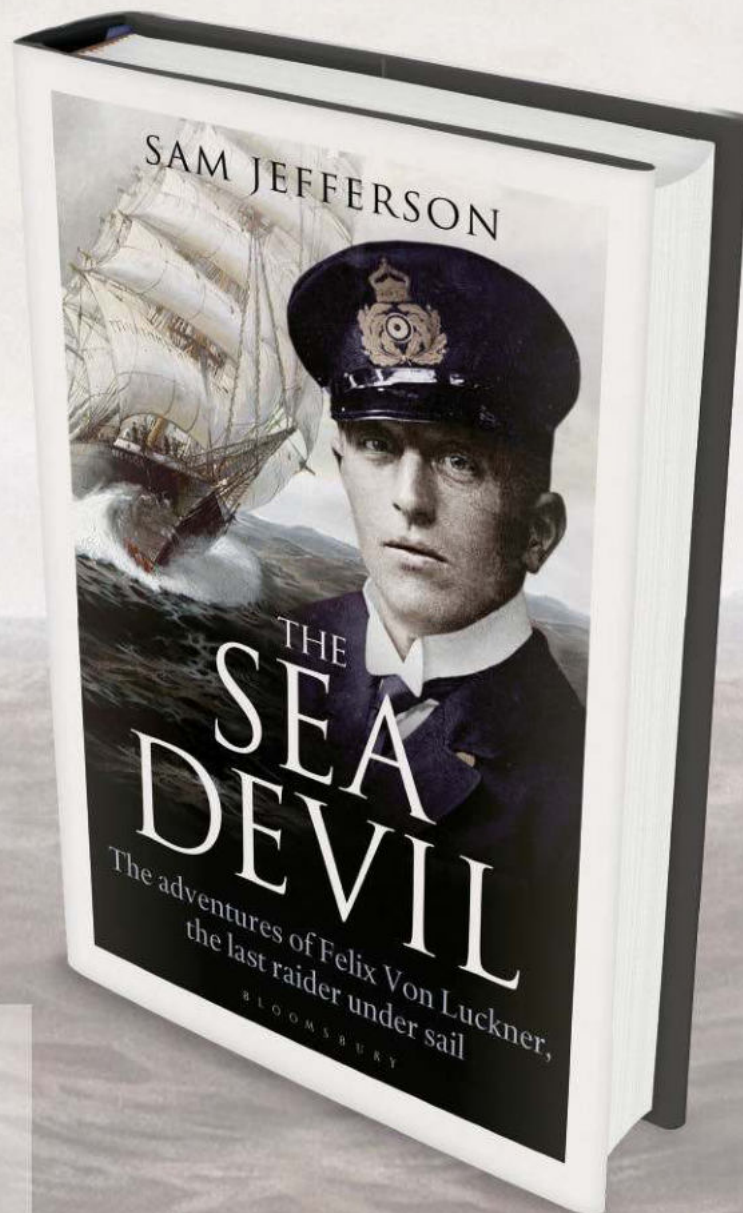
A RIP-ROARING WORLD WAR I STORY OF
ESPIONAGE, COUNTERESPIONAGE AND PIRACY
OF THE MOST GENTLEMANLY KIND.

THE SEA DEVIL

In December 1916, the SMS Seeadler, a three-masted windjammer commanded by swashbuckling German aristocrat Felix von Luckner, slipped past the British blockade and into the Atlantic.

Over an epic voyage, von Luckner used cunning and deception to destroy fourteen merchant ships, evading the utterly foxed and infuriated British Admiralty in a daring game of cat and mouse, all the while throwing lavish parties for his prisoners.

This is the fascinating story of an unforgettable naval commander whose amazing exploits earned him the epithet 'the Sea Devil'.



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Discover how Suleiman the Magnificent earned his name from page 54

Welcome

"Hitler's power is not political; it is magic," said Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung, referring to the Führer's ability to play on a crowd's darkest desires to whip them into a frenzy. However, as you'll discover from page 30, many high-ranking Nazis believed in real magic, keeping astrologers and Tarot card readers on the Third Reich's payroll.

Between Hitler exploiting German folklore to prop up his hateful ideology and Heinrich Himmler's more eccentric projects – including using a pendulum swung over a map of the Atlantic to divine Allied navy positions – the low hum of occult chanting was never far away during Nazi Germany's 12-year reign.

Also in this issue, you can also find out how Louis XIV brought the Bourbon dynasty back

from the brink (from page 42) and how Ottoman sultan Suleiman the Magnificent conquered Eastern Europe (page 54).

As if that wasn't enough, we take a look at the devastating death tolls caused by the world's worst plagues and how we've tried to fight back against epidemics from page 16. We reveal early quarantine methods, find out why plague doctors wore those strange masks and explore the revolutionary invention of antibiotics.

Hope you enjoy the issue!



Jack Parsons
Editor

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The Siege of Lisbon

Find out how the Crusaders stole back the city of Lisbon from Moroccan forces before almost turning on each other with a step-by-step battle map.

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Lawmen of the frontier

From the Texas Rangers to the Northwest Mounted Police, meet the real-life legends who kept the peace in the farthest reaches of the Old West.

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Dan Jones vs The Templars

If you've read *The Da Vinci Code*, you might think you know the Knights Templar. But, as Dan Jones explains, the shadowy sect are shrouded in myth.

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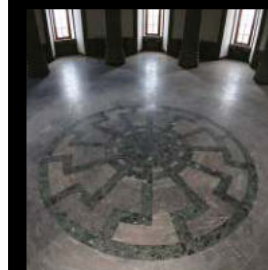
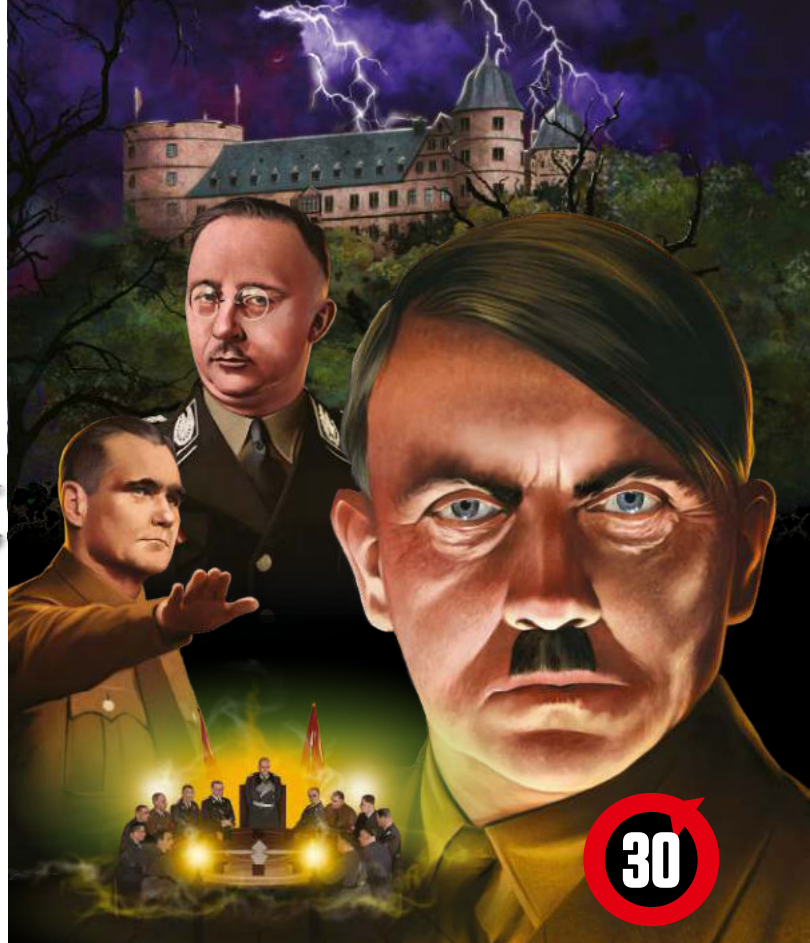
Meet the real-life legends and hired guns that kept the peace in the farthest reaches of the Old West

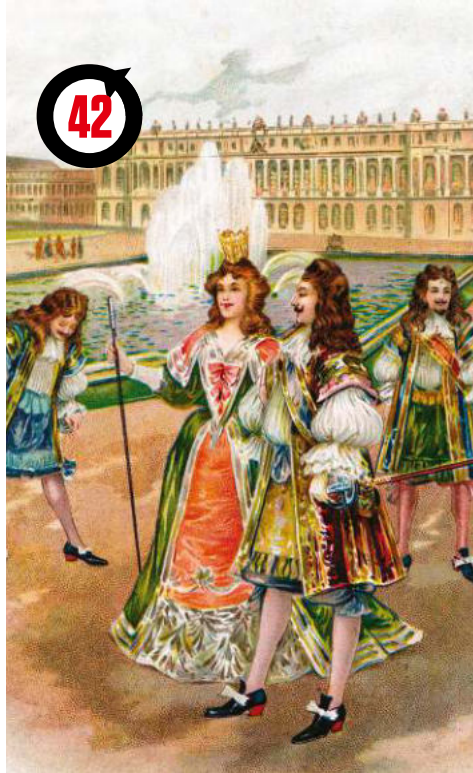
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The historian is on a quest to bust the myths surrounding the monastic warriors





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Get rich in the boomtown that was Renaissance Florence – or die trying

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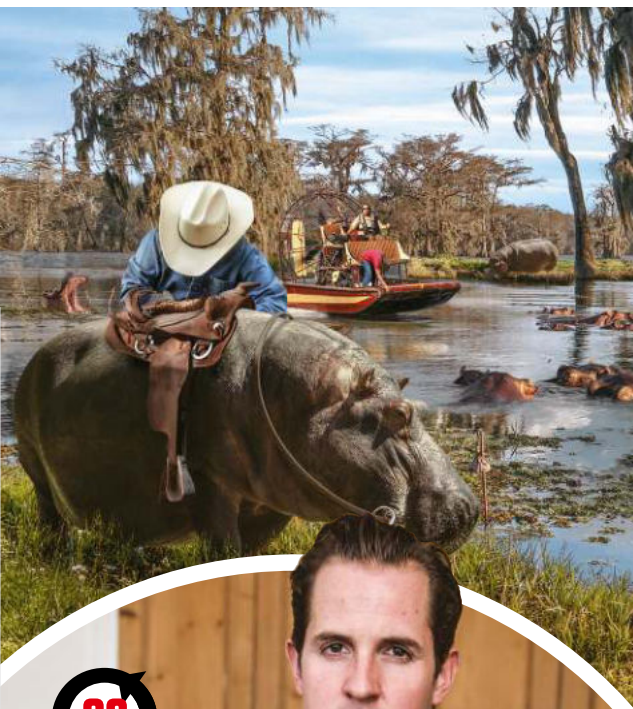
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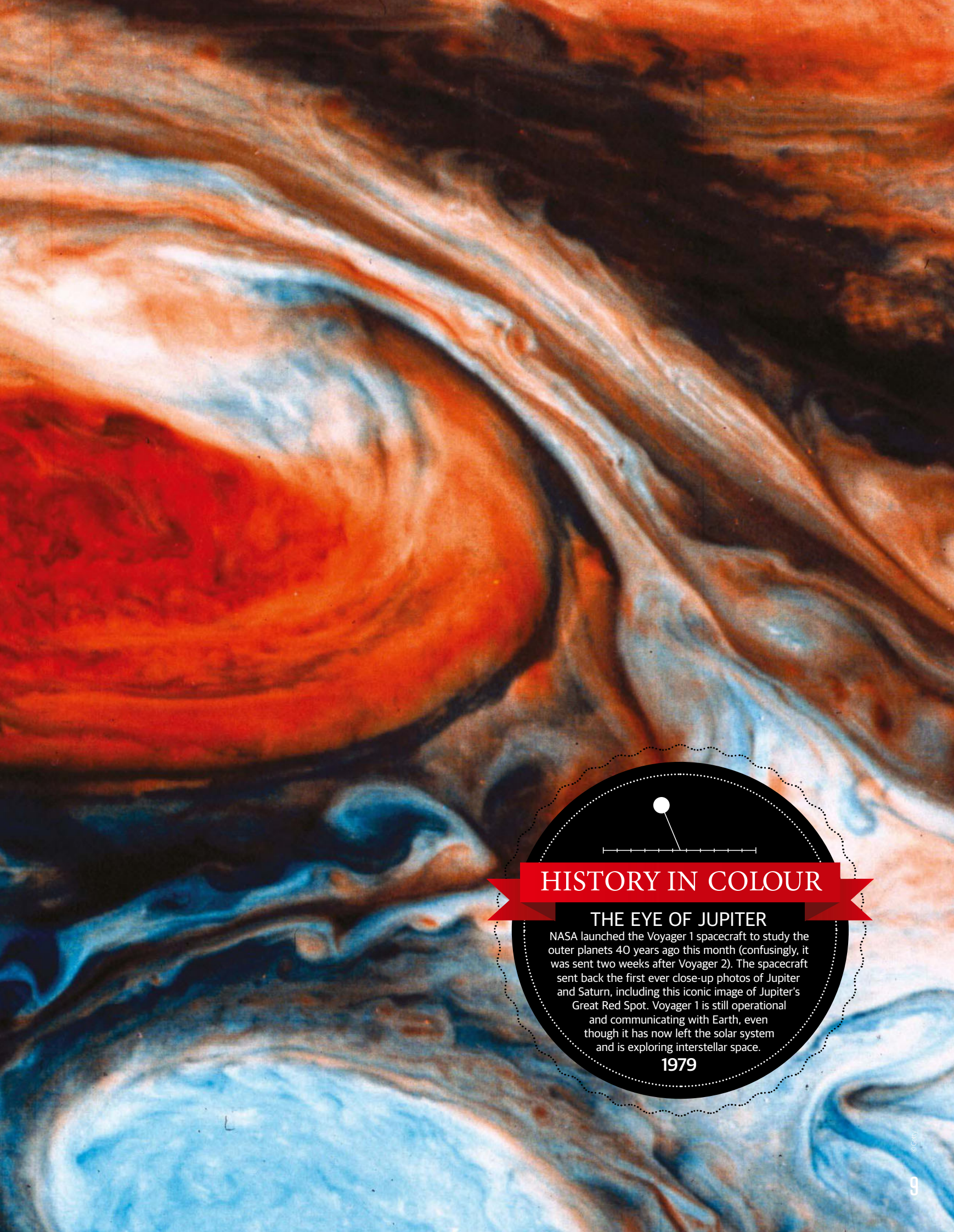
THE LITTLE ROCK NINE

Under the watchful eye of paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division, nine black students attend Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, for the first time. Despite a Supreme Court ruling that American schools had to desegregate, black students were initially barred from entering the formerly white-only school by an angry mob and state officials. President Eisenhower sent in the troops to uphold the law.

1957







HISTORY IN COLOUR

THE EYE OF JUPITER

NASA launched the Voyager 1 spacecraft to study the outer planets 40 years ago this month (confusingly, it was sent two weeks after Voyager 2). The spacecraft sent back the first ever close-up photos of Jupiter and Saturn, including this iconic image of Jupiter's Great Red Spot. Voyager 1 is still operational and communicating with Earth, even though it has now left the solar system and is exploring interstellar space.

1979



HISTORY IN PICTURES

A MASSACRE IN MUNICH

Armed police drop into position above the apartment where the Israeli Olympic team are being held hostage. The athletes were captured by Palestinian extremists who demanded the freeing of political prisoners. The group, known as Black September, discovered the police's plan to storm the building after seeing it on TV. The situation ended with a gunfight that left five of the terrorists and all of the nine hostages dead.

1972







HISTORY IN COLOUR

THE MOTHER OF CALCUTTA

Mother Teresa, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning nun who devoted her life to working with the sick and poor, died 20 years ago on 5 September. Born Agnes Bojaxhiu in Macedonia, she took the name Sister Theresa in Ireland, where she began her training as a nun. In 1950, she founded the Missionaries of Charity and worked in the slums of Calcutta. She ran the order for half a century, spreading it to 130 countries.

1997

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ALL ABOUT

EPIDEMICS

History's worst outbreaks go under the microscope as we consider their catastrophic body counts, world-changing impact and how they were overcome



==The Worst Plagues in History==

From the Black Death to smallpox to the Zika virus, the history of the world echoes with the devastation left by catastrophic outbreaks of disease

PLAGUE OF ATHENS

100,000 Number of people who died



1 MASS GRAVE

Discovered in 1994

150

Skeletons in mass grave



8

Number of bodies were children



ANTONINE PLAGUE

When soldiers returned to the Roman Empire from campaigning, they brought back more than the spoils of victory.

This smallpox epidemic laid waste to the army and killed over five million Roman citizens.



430 BCE

165-180 CE

FLU PANDEMIC

In the modern industrial age, new transport links made it easy for the flu to wreak havoc. In just a few months it spanned the globe, killing one million.



It took just five weeks for the epidemic to reach peak mortality

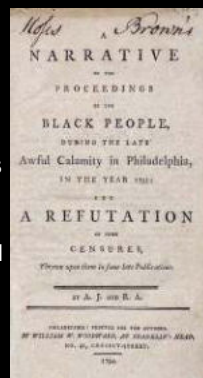
THIRD PANDEMIC

This outbreak of bubonic plague travelled from China to India, killing tens of millions. In India, the colonial government responded with aggressive and harsh quarantine, resulting in political unrest and violence.



PHILADELPHIA YELLOW FEVER EPIDEMIC

When yellow fever seized Philadelphia, then America's capital, officials wrongly believe that slaves were immune. As a result, abolitionists called for people of African origin to be recruited to nurse the sick.



RUSSIAN PLAGUE

In plague-ravaged Moscow, the terror of quarantined citizens erupted into violence. Riots spread through the city and culminated in the murder of Archbishop Ambrosius, who was encouraging crowds not to gather for worship.



1889-90

1855-1959

1793

1770-72

AMERICAN POLIO EPIDEMIC

27,000 Number diagnosed in North America



6,000 Victims who died in North America

21,000 New York children left temporarily or permanently paralysed by the disease



Number of New York cats and dogs (wrongly) put down to halt spread of disease*

80,000

* Polio is only spread through human transmission.

SPANISH FLU

500 million people from the South Seas to the North Pole fell victim to Spanish Flu. One-fifth of those died, with some indigenous communities pushed to the brink of extinction.



ASIAN FLU

The Asian Flu pandemic was another global showing for influenza. With its roots in China, the disease claimed 2 million lives. Some researchers believe it owes its existence to avian flu.



1916

1918-19

1957-58

PLAGUE OF JUSTINIAN

This outbreak of the bubonic plague killed more than ten per cent of the global population. It marked the start of the Byzantine Empire's decline and changes the history of the world.



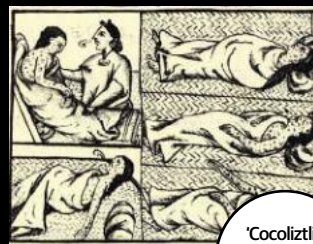
THE BLACK DEATH

Still the granddaddy of epidemics, the Black Death travelled from Asia to Europe, leaving devastation in its wake. Historians estimate that it wiped out over half of Europe's population.



COCOLIZTLI EPIDEMIC

This mysterious infection, possibly some form of viral haemorrhagic fever, killed 15 million inhabitants of Mexico. Among a population already weakened by extreme drought, the disease proved to be utterly catastrophic.



'Cocoliztli' is the Aztec word for 'pest'

541-542

1346-53

1545-48

GREAT PLAGUE OF MARSEILLE

100,000

Number of people who died in two years



2 METRES

Height of quarantine wall built around Marseille

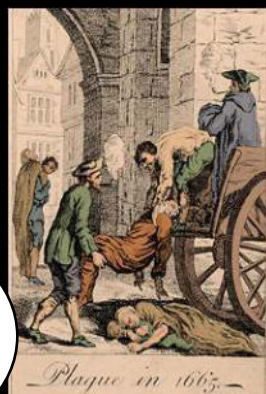


70 CM

The thickness of the solid stone wall

GREAT PLAGUE OF LONDON

The Black Death's last major outbreak in Great Britain causes a mass exodus from London, led by Charles II. To date, the Black Death has not made a significant return to British shores.



Starting in April 1665, three plague deaths were reported. In July, there were 2,000

AMERICAN PLAGUES

The American Plagues are a cluster of Eurasian diseases brought to America by European explorers. These illnesses, including smallpox, contribute to the collapse of the Incan and Aztec civilisations.



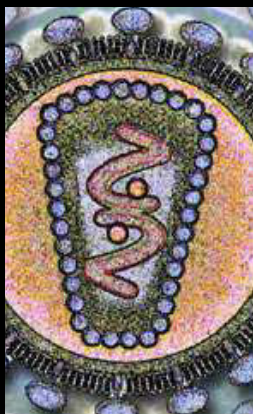
1720

1665-66

16TH CENTURY

AIDS PANDEMIC

The Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) has claimed 25 million lives since it was first identified. 64 per cent of the estimated 40 million living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) today live in Sub-Saharan Africa.



WEST AFRICAN EBOLA EPIDEMIC

Number of cases reported in West Africa

28,616



11,310

Victims of ten different nationalities died

The World Health Organization believes that as many as

70% of cases were unrecorded



Ebola can be transmitted via semen for seven weeks after a patient's recovery

ZIKA VIRUS

The impact of the recent Zika epidemic in South America won't be known for several years. In the meantime, scientists face a race against time to bring the virus under control.



1981-PRESENT

2014

2015-PRESENT



LAZZARETTO ISLANDS

VENICE'S QUARANTINE STATIONS, 15TH CENTURY

The Black Death was spread from victim to victim through fleabites, body fluids and sometimes on the droplets of a cough or sneeze. This meant that major Medieval cities, where the common people lived in cramped and dirty conditions, were a breeding ground for such infections. As commercial hubs, the cities and ports also attracted traders who would either bring the plague with them or catch it while visiting and pass it on while they travelled.

Though the exact cause of the Black Death and how it spread wasn't understood at the time, contemporary city burghers did what they could to isolate the sick. Infected houses were locked down, animals were banned from the streets, bodies were hauled into pits, public gatherings were forbidden and trade was halted.

In 1348, the Venetians came up with a grand plan to prevent the disease from spreading through their population: quarantine. Any vessel that wanted to enter the island city's ports had to spend 40 days anchored offshore to prove that its passengers were not sick – or die trying. In 1403, the citizens went one step further and built a public hospital on the neighbouring island of Lazzaretto Vecchio to isolate any citizens that showed signs of plague.

Considered a success, soon more islands in the Venetian Lagoon – like Lazzaretto Nuovo and Poveglia – were being turned into holding pens for potential plague carriers. Rather than staying on their ships, newcomers were encouraged to maroon themselves on these islands while handing over their cargo to be 'decontaminated'. Meanwhile, the waters were guarded by armed patrols and anyone who violated the rules was sent to the gallows.

While Venetians were able to curb the damage as the plague struck Europe, the reality was that being sent to one of these islands was often a death sentence. More than 1,500 skeletons have been unearthed on Lazzaretto Vecchio, and thousands more are thought to be lurking beneath the ground.

Gunpowder storage

After the Black Death of 1346-53, plagues came and went across Europe and between outbreaks, the island was used to store gunpowder in two 'torresini da polvere'. This dangerous substance was unstable, so the quarantine islands provided the perfect location for storage away from the healthy population of Venice.

Mass grave

At the height of the plagues of the 14th and 16th centuries, hundreds of people died every day on the islands and the body carriers were overwhelmed. The corpses were piled into mass graves, or plague pits, and it's rumoured that many were buried before they had even died.

Decontamination

Contemporary medicine believed that the plague was spread by miasma or bad air. In an attempt to tackle this, juniper, rosemary and other herbs were piled up and burnt. Soiled clothes were boiled or coated in vinegar, and the cargo from incoming ships was left in the open air to be 'decontaminated'.

Unsafe harbour

Plague victims were taken to the island by boat and left on their shores to protect the people of Venice from infection. Incoming ships were also made to wait on one of the islands in case their crew were carrying the disease. The word 'quarantine' comes from the Italian 'quarantina giorni', meaning 40 days – the time ships were made to wait before making port.



Nobles' quarters

The island's original facilities had the capacity to hold just over 200 people. Separate quarters were built to house those of higher social status, but the plague was indiscriminate and once they succumbed to the disease they were buried alongside paupers in the same mass graves. Jewellery, coins and combs have been unearthed alongside the bodies.

The hospital

There were three types of plague – bubonic, septicaemic and pneumonic – named depending on the part of the body affected. Bubonic plague victims had swollen lymph nodes, septicaemic had blood poisoning with dead and blackened tissue and pneumonic had a bloody cough. The hospital was built in 1423, but with no treatment and little space, patients were piled three or four to a bed.

Bell tower

The plague was believed to be a divine punishment, so churches were erected so that prayers could be made for the sick. The bell tower also provided a convenient vantage point from which new arrivals could be monitored. This one was dedicated to Saint Mary of Nazareth, and the island became known as Nazaretum, or Lazzaretto, eventually giving rise to the word 'Lazaret', meaning isolation hospital.

Survivor transfer

Even though plague treatments were primitive, some people did manage to fight off the infection. Those souls who survived their ordeal on Lazzaretto Vecchio (the 'old' quarantine island) were sent to convalesce on Lazaretto Nuova (the 'new' island). Survivors travelled across the water, passing armed patrols and mixing with quarantined sailors and their cargo waiting to be allowed into Venice.

Artificial island

The plague islands were located in the inland sea surrounding Venice, which is littered with submerged mudflats. When the tide went out, more land was revealed beneath the water and, as the demands on the island increased, this hidden space was reclaimed to accommodate more buildings, giving the island its distinctive artificial outline.

Staff quarters

Plague treatments were experimental and based on the best science of the day, which revolved around the idea that the body was filled with four humours – blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile – and that sickness resulted from them becoming imbalanced. The hospital's doctors would have attempted to rebalance their patients by bloodletting, and its body carriers would have been responsible for collecting and burying the dead.

THE *Anatomy of*

A PLAGUE DOCTOR

EUROPE, 1616-1721

GLASS EYES

PROTECTIVE PEEPERS

Built into the hood, these allowed the doctor to see without exposing their eyes to the outside air. The entire design of the outfit, attributed to French physician Charles de Lorme and extensively worn during devastating outbreaks in mid 17th-century Europe, was to conceal every part of the body from poisonous air or 'miasma' that was thought to cause disease.

CANE

MULTIPURPOSE INSTRUMENT

Despite their elaborate protection, doctors still kept contact with infected patients and the poorest echelon of society, who they were tasked with treating, to a minimum. The cane was used to examine infected victims, instruct family members on where and how to treat the wounds and generally keep people at bay.

OVERCOAT

GREASY BODY ARMOUR

The full-length leather coat covered the doctor from head to toe. Aside from metal armour, leather was the toughest wearable material around and so was considered robust enough to keep the plague at bay. For added protection, all the garments were covered in wax or animal fat to further repel miasma and sufferers' bodily fluids.

BREECHES

PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE

One of the plague's nastiest symptoms was its vigorous early assault on the lymph glands around the groin, neck and armpits. For this reason, the heavy hood covered the neck and upper chest, while burly leather breeches were worn on the legs.

HAT

HEALER'S HELMET

The leather hat was a staple uniform for Medieval doctors and the wide brim was thought to add protection. It was worn by the plague doctors during the 1665 London outbreak, despite the fact most weren't qualified physicians – the majority had fled London along with their rich clientele.

However, the ineffective treatments administered by both meant this made little difference to sufferers.

BEAK MASK

OMINOUS AVIAN

The beak was the most recognisable part of the doctor's outfit. It's long cavity was stuffed with herbs, flowers and noxious oils in the belief this would counteract miasma. But its sinister design was known to inspire terror in the sick.

GLOVES

PLAGUE GAUNTLETS

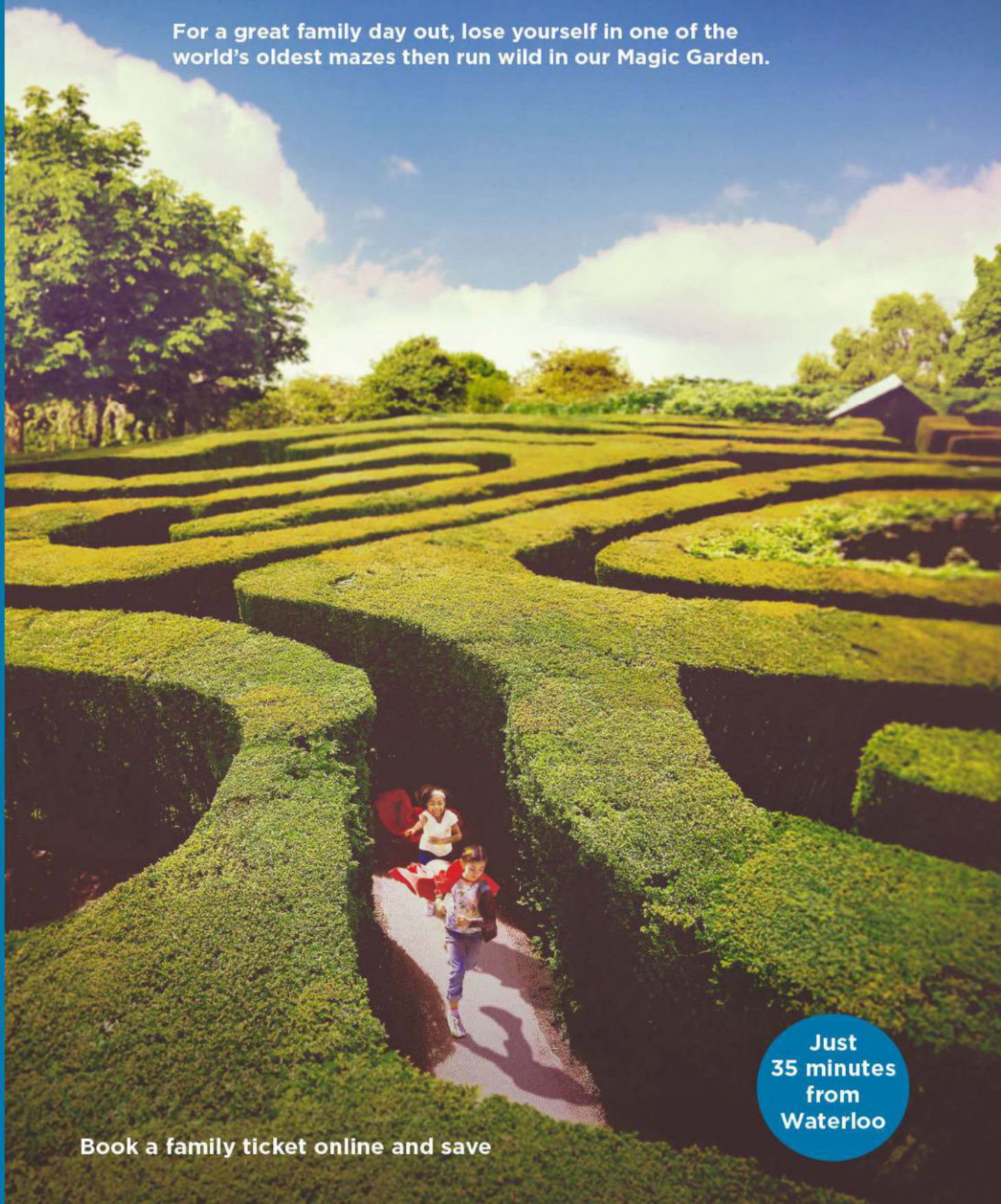
The final covering of the hands may have kept the doctors safe, but in actual fact they did more harm than good, spreading the disease as they visited victims and condemning entire families who they ordered to be quarantined alongside an infected member of the household.



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Day in the life

A US ARMY MEDIC FIGHTING SPANISH FLU

UNITED STATES, OCTOBER 1918

With approximately five million US military personnel drafted during World War I, crowded army camps and trenches were a breeding ground for a deadly wave of influenza - Spanish flu. At the height of America's involvement in the conflict, Spanish flu infected up to 40 per cent of the army and navy, diminishing the active troops in their tens of thousands. Pressure on medics increased to treat a virus that had developed a hardy immunity to previous methods of treatment. Despite the medics' best efforts, by the end of the war more troops had died from influenza than on the battlefield.

ADMISSION

The hospital tents, which had been separated from the general casualties of war, were overcrowded and overstretched, and admitting new patients was a lengthy and laborious task. To give an idea of the rate of the admission, the US Navy recorded a total of 106,000 hospital admissions by the end of the war due to influenza and pneumonia.

MAKING THE ROUNDS

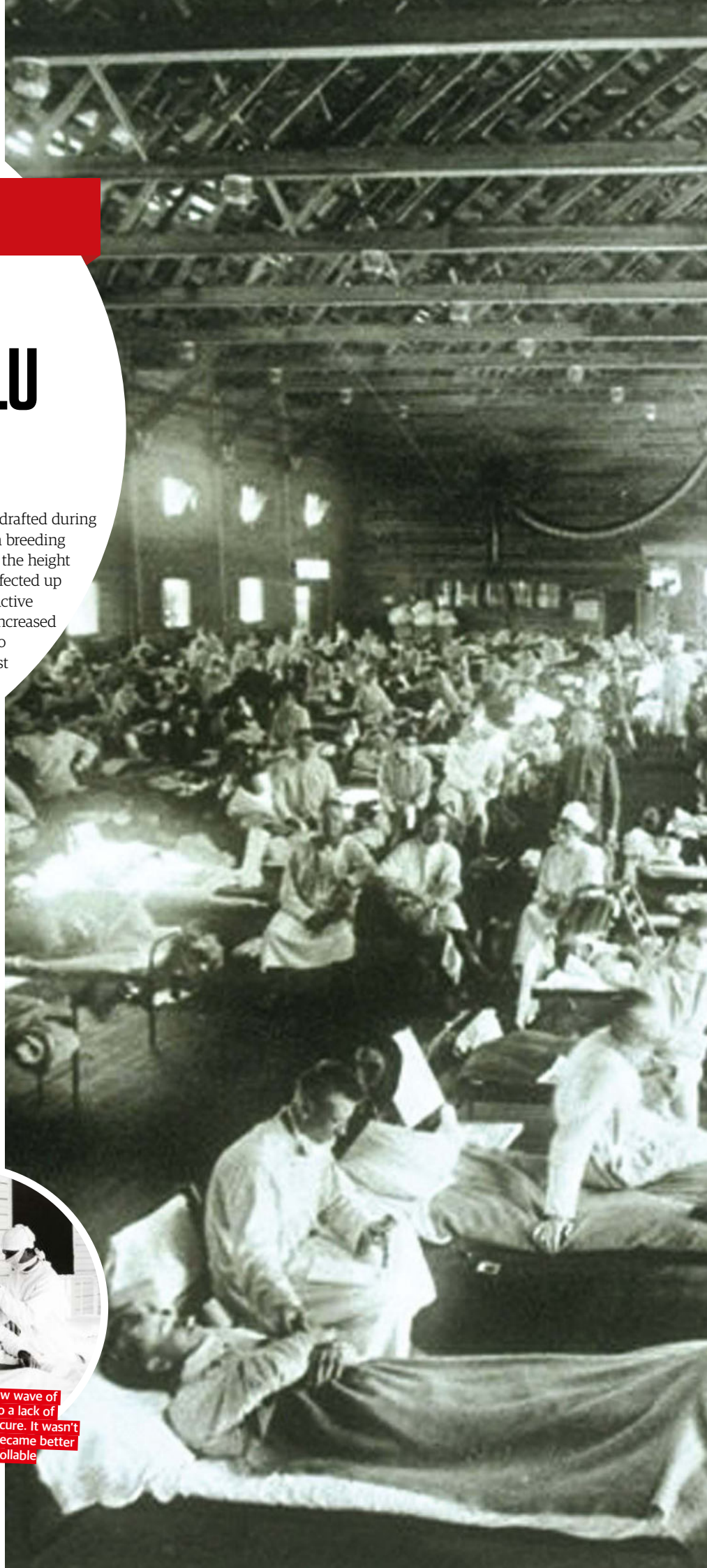
Pressure to get troops back onto the battlefield was high and the line officers were more concerned about those well enough to fight as opposed to those still sick. But when it was time for the medical department to check on the patients, few, if any, had made a full recovery.

TREATMENT

As the sickness spread, medical officers sprayed the mouths and throats of 800 patients each day with a solution called dichloramine-T as a preventive measure. Unfortunately, when they compared influenza rates amongst untreated men, the medics found the treatment made little to no difference.



Few infected with the new wave of influenza survived due to a lack of antibiotics that could offer a cure. It wasn't until 1930 that the disease became better understood and controllable.





EXAMINING THE DEAD

In a bid to understand more about the newer and deadlier wave of influenza, autopsies were performed on the recruits that died. Hoping to find answers, there were often more new questions than revelations as to why the disease was killing off what were formerly fit and healthy young men. The reports on their findings formed some of the most extensive research into the virus that has ever been produced.

DECISION TIME

Quarantines were almost impossible to maintain and medics often found themselves arguing with army officials about isolating patients when they needed to ship them to Europe on crowded vessels. Medical personnel advised against the transportation of soldiers but, as the war surged, army officials were eager to send men to the front lines to fight, knowing full well that the pandemic was in full swing.

CONTACT RELATIVES

Because so many individuals became seriously ill, camp officials were routinely sending out 'danger' or 'death' telegrams to families and loved ones. Because they received so many return calls, telegrams and visitors, the army had to set up a separate hospital tent as an information bureau to direct the flow of traffic regarding the sickly and the deceased.

REMOVE THE BODIES

With fatalities rising at an alarming rate, the mortuary, which was only built to deal with four bodies at a time, became overcrowded. Officials negotiated with local undertakers to take the bodies for \$50 each. When a flatbed truck was produced to remove the dead, the army quickly provided more dignified closed trucks to transport the bodies in.



According to historical data, more than half of young adults aged 20 to 40 were killed by the virus

REST, RECUPERATE, REMEMBER

After a long day of treating patients, the medics would need to rest themselves, although sleep and peace of mind were often slow to come after seeing men squirming and writhing as death took hold. However, due to pure exhaustion, they would eventually succumb to sleep before starting again the next day.

How to TREAT THE BLACK DEATH

FIGHT THE GREAT PESTILENCE JUST AS MEDIEVAL PHYSICIANS DID ENGLAND, 1300S

When the Black Death came to England in 1348, it left a trail of devastation in its wake. More than 1 million people fell victim to the disease that had already swept through Europe, wiping out millions as it continued its merciless progress through the land.

The cause of the Great Pestilence was a mystery and, as doctors struggled to find a cure, some outlandish methods of healing the infection emerged. In this simple guide, you'll learn how to treat a case of the Black Death just as doctors in the Middle Ages did. Whether you'll live to tell the tale is another story.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED...

A SHARP KNIFE

FIRE

CANOPY BED

LEECHES

HERBS

The doctor is in

Plague doctors might look fearsome but they were actually helpless against the scourge of the Great Pestilence.

Meet the patient

Stricken with pain, the patient suffering from the Black Death faces a bleak and uncertain future.

Cut them open

Using a sharp blade, open the vein of the inner elbow on the side where the patient is experiencing the most pain.

Apply the leeches

Apply leeches to the wound. If the infection is already severe, open more veins and apply more leeches.

Remove the leeches

Once the leeches have grown fat and fallen off, return them to their jar and dress the wound.



01 TIME TO BLEED

As soon as the patient shows even the slightest symptoms of the plague, there's no time to lose. Ask him which side of his body is the most painful and have the surgeon open a vein in the arm on that side or, even better, apply leeches liberally to the painful areas. Bleed him until his soreness dissipates.

02 TAKE YOUR MEDICINE

There are all sorts of natural remedies, known as plague waters, available for the Black Death, and your local doctor will know which one is right for your patient. To make your own, mix angelica, juniper, figs, saffron and vinegar. Add a little nutmeg to taste and serve hot – this will encourage the patient to sweat out the pestilence.

How not to... dispose of a body

As the Black Death ravaged the lands, plague pits became a familiar sight, along with vast bonfires on which the bodies of the dead were burned. In the Crimean city of Kaffa in 1347, however, the Mongolian Tatars decided on a very novel way of disposing of their plague dead.

Tatar warriors had besieged the Italian inhabitants of Kaffa without success for months, hoping to drive from the city. Now, with their ranks depleted by plague, the dispirited

Tatars began catapulting plague-ridden corpses over the city walls. The Italian populace took fright and many fled Kaffa for their homeland, bringing the Black Death with them to mainland Europe.

This incident is one of the earliest known examples of biological warfare. Though the impact on the mainland was devastating, the Tatars did not conquer Tatar and the city remained under Italian control.



03 BURST BUBOES

As the plague progresses, the telltale buboes will start to appear, most commonly in the groin and armpit. These must be purged without delay as they contain the disease. Apply a hot poultice of lily root, ale grounds and mallow to bring out the boil then pierce the bottom of the buboes to drain out the poison.



05 FUMIGATE THE 'BAD AIR'

While the patient rests, it's time to fumigate the miasma. Cleansing the air will help ward off the plague and treat those already suffering. Hang posies of rosemary, sage and lavender in the house, particularly in the sickroom. You can increase the efficacy by keeping a heated bowl of vinegar near the patient and allowing the steam to disinfect the air.

04 SWEAT IT OUT

If your patient is mobile, encourage him to sit between two fires; if he is in bed, surround him with bottles filled with hot water. The patient should sweat for a minimum of three hours, preferably even more, as this will encourage the infection out of the body. Dry him off, dress him warmly and put him back to bed.



06 REPEAT AD NAUSEAM

Repeat the treatments, occasionally feeding the patient small amounts of simple food such as chicken or veal washed down with mild ales. The patient will soon be on the road to recovery or, sadly, taking a turn for the worst. If your efforts aren't successful, don't feel too disappointed – millions have already fallen victim to the Black Death.

IF THAT DOESN'T WORK, TRY THESE CURES...



FLAGELLATE

Join a flagellation procession and whip yourself for your sins, thus earning God's forgiveness and ridding yourself of plague.



CHICKENS

Pluck a live chicken and hold it against your buboes. This will draw the poison out of you and into the unsuspecting bird.



PIGEONS

If chickens don't work, slice up a dead pigeon and rub its entrails all over your body.



FAECES

Open the buboes and smear them with a paste made from human faeces, tree resin and plant roots. Be sure to bind the wounds up tight!



EMERALDS

Richer patients can crush emeralds into powder, mix them with broth and down them in one gulp.

Hall of Fame

PIONEERING SCIENTISTS & MEDICS

In a time when diseases like polio, TB and smallpox struck fear in communities, meet 10 medical marvels who helped turn the tide



Edward Jenner is credited with removing the threat of smallpox

EDWARD JENNER ENGLISH, 1749-1823

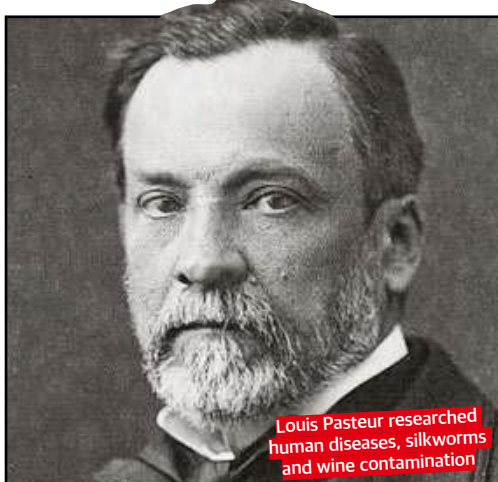
Smallpox killed millions across the centuries and was a particular danger to children but, thanks to Edward Jenner, the deadly disease was eventually eradicated. The doctor made his breakthrough in 1796 with an experiment on an eight-year-old boy, James Phipps. Taking pus from a cowpox pustule, he placed it in an incision in James' arm, proving there was truth to the old folk tale that milkmaids suffering from cowpox never contracted smallpox. Some were horrified by Jenner's methods – particularly the clergy, who pronounced it ungodly to insert humans with matter from diseased animals – but the vaccine became widely popular.

The word 'vaccine' was coined by Jenner following his famous smallpox experiments. He took it from the Latin 'vacca' for cow

LOUIS PASTEUR

FRENCH, 1822-95

French national hero Louis Pasteur dipped his toes in many a scientific project and was a microbiology pioneer. The chemist's vaccines have protected millions and his research into germ theory proved that food goes off due to contamination by microbes rather than miasma. Pasteur, who lost two daughters to typhoid, made strides in tackling diseases such as cholera and rabies, while his former assistants Emile Roux and Alexandre Yersin assisted in the journey towards preventative action for diphtheria. Pasteur experimented on chickens for his cholera tests, injecting them with old bacteria, which left them immune from fresh cholera intakes.

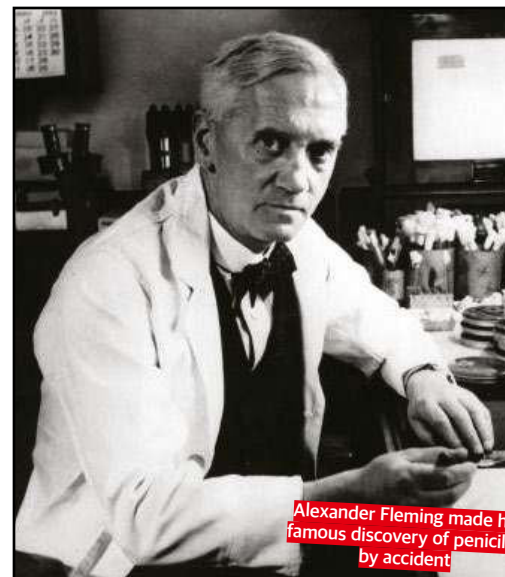


Louis Pasteur researched human diseases, silkworms and wine contamination

ALEXANDER FLEMING

SCOTTISH, 1881-1955

Known for his discovery of penicillin, Alexander Fleming was one of a flurry of innovators across the 19th and 20th centuries. The microbiologist, who researched causes of maladies such as tetanus and gangrene, stumbled across penicillin in 1928. Observing mould growing in a petri dish, he realised a culture of bacteria had killed the germs around it. The antibiotic was mass produced during World War II by Howard Walter Florey Ernst Boris Chain, who came across Fleming's research when looking for such a treatment. Many lives were saved and the trio shared a Nobel Prize in 1945.



Alexander Fleming made his famous discovery of penicillin by accident

"In fields of observation, chance favours only the prepared mind" *Louis Pasteur*

JONAS SALK AMERICAN, 1914-95

Polio was widespread in the 20th century and it was the focus of much panic in post-war America. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who died in the final year of World War II, was thought to have contracted the disease himself, aged 39, and became paraplegic, though some today believe he was instead suffering from Guillain-Barre syndrome. Jonas Salk created the first successful polio vaccine in 1953, rolled out in 1955, and the doctor, his wife and children had been among those to first test the formula. Cases of polio dropped dramatically and its threat globally was significantly reduced.

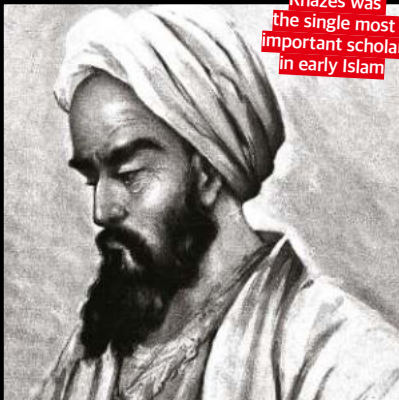


Jonas Salk combated the growing epidemic of polio

RHAZES

PERSIAN, 865-925

Abu Bakr Mohammad Ibn Zakariya al-Razi – known in the West as Rhazes – was the dominant scholar of early Islam. Inspired by Hippocrates and ancient Greek medicine, he wrote books across a variety of topics, including the *Al-Mansuri* and *Al-Hawi*, encyclopaedic reviews of medicine translated into many languages, which were then used as standard texts for Islamic and European students for centuries. Physician to the royal court and director of a Baghdad hospital, Rhazes presided over improvements including noting down patients' case histories and marking down symptoms of illnesses. His work on diseases saw him conclude that measles and smallpox were distinct afflictions.

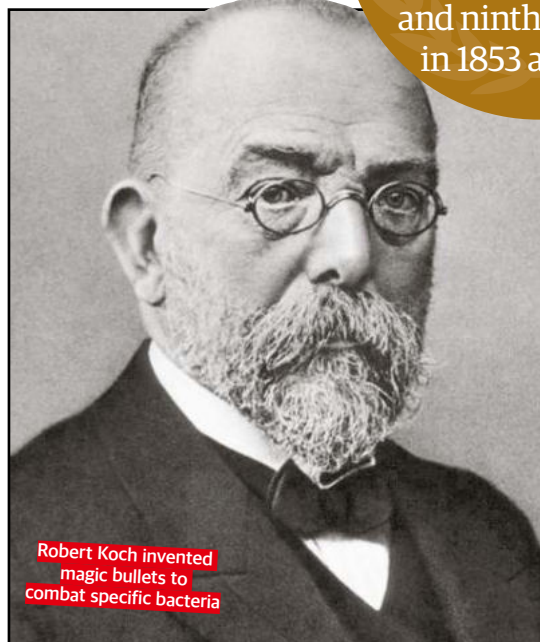


Rhazes was the single most important scholar in early Islam

ROBERT KOCH

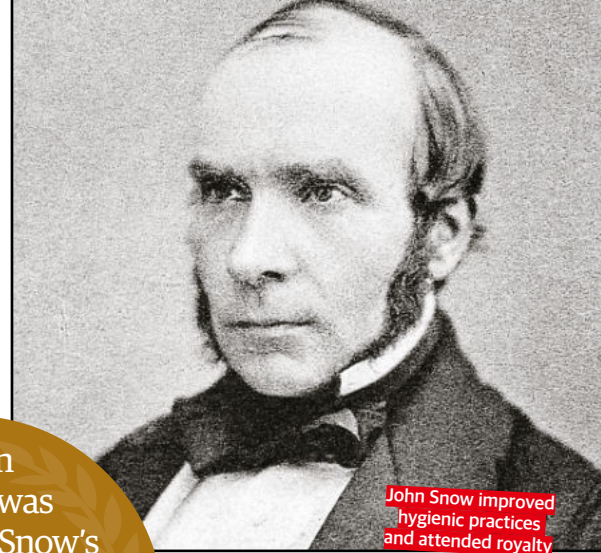
GERMAN, 1843-1910

Described as the founder of modern bacteriology, it was Nobel Prize-winner Robert Koch who developed the first 'magic bullets' – chemicals formulated to attack specific bacteria. He proved a link between the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis* and anthrax through testing mice and created techniques of staining bacteria to improve visibility under the microscope. Koch and his team were able to identify bacterial causes for tuberculosis and cholera, and his methods inspired successors in the field.



Robert Koch invented magic bullets to combat specific bacteria

Queen Victoria was a patient of Snow's – he administered chloroform to her during the births of her eighth and ninth children, in 1853 and 1857



John Snow improved hygienic practices and attended royalty

JOHN SNOW

ENGLISH, 1813-58

John Snow was a giant in the Victorian era, seen as one of the founders of modern epidemiology. An experiment in 1854 linked a public water pump in Soho to an outbreak cholera, confirming the physician's theory that the disease could be spread through contaminated water or food. Snow was a champion of anaesthesia and hygienic practices in the field and he also designed a mask to administer chloroform after hearing of the drug's effectiveness.

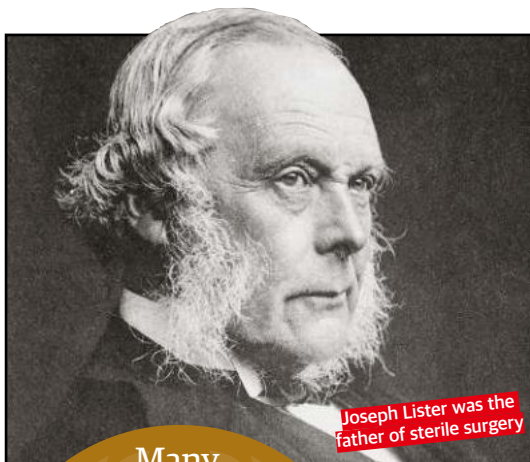


Ronald Ross solved the puzzle of malaria infection

RONALD ROSS

ENGLISH, 1857-1932

Indian Medical Service doctor Ronald Ross, born in the country to a British family, was the man to prove the long-suspected link between mosquitoes and malaria. In 1897, Ross, a future Nobel Prize winner, dissected a mosquito that had fed on a malaria victim and found in its stomach the parasite previously observed by Alphonse Laveran and Sir Patrick Manson when they examined blood samples taken from others afflicted by the disease.



Joseph Lister was the father of sterile surgery

JOSEPH LISTER

ENGLISH, 1827-1912

Joseph Lister was the champion of new cleaning practices in medicine and revolutionised surgical procedures in the process. He experimented with exposing wounds to chemicals – using dressings soaked in carbolic acid (phenol) – and found the chances of infection reduced significantly. Lister also introduced handwashing in a medical environment, the sterilisation of instruments and began spraying carbolic acid in theatre while operations took place. His simple but effective principles were adopted by numerous surgeons.

ELIZABETH KENNY

AUSTRALIAN, 1880-1952

Elizabeth Kenny attracted acclaim and controversy in equal measure. Unsatisfied by traditional treatments for polio – centring on immobilisation through the use of plaster casts and splints – the Australian focused on efforts to 're-train' the muscles, using moist hot packs to reduce pain and allow limbs to be gently exercised. Although medical figures poured scorn on her methods, the public had a very different view. Kenny's practices are still used in rehabilitative medicine.

Elizabeth Kenny was admired but also the subject of scrutiny



Many of these figures received great accolades, but Lister wins the prize for the strangest – the mouthwash Listerine was named in his honour

5 shocking facts about...

THE JUSTINIAN PLAGUE

BYZANTINE EMPIRE, 541-542 CE

AT A GLANCE

The reign of Justinian I and Theodora has been seen as a golden age for the Byzantine Empire, but its opulence was overshadowed by a terrible pandemic – the 'Justinian Plague'. Thought to have originated in Asia or Africa, it spread quickly through the empire and beyond, causing millions of deaths.

01 Bodies stored in masse

Once the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, was struck, the plague ravaged the empire with deadly speed – it's estimated that at its peak 10,000 people died every day. The mounting toll was so huge that bodies were packed inside buildings, or sometimes just left out in the open, according to Procopius, a contemporary ancient historian.

02 Caused a crisis of faith

The devastation not only heralded financial crisis and devastating famine, it also provoked a change in religious worship. Emperor Justinian modelled himself as a paragon of piety – something his immediate successors continued – and the Cult of Mary gained prominence, as did idolatry, as citizens sought new divine inspiration.

03 End of an empire

Some see the pandemic as contributing to the eventual end of the Byzantine Empire and the classical period, ushering in the Middle Ages. It is claimed more than a third of Constantinople's people perished, and even the emperor himself fell ill, experiencing the buboes associated with plague, but he miraculously recovered.

04 Linked to the Black Death

Modern scientists have proved that different strains of the bacterium *Yersinia pestis* were present in both the Byzantine Justinian Plague and the Black Death in the Middle Ages. This connection was made by testing the skeletons of plague victims struck down approximately 1,500 years ago, who were buried in Bavaria, Germany.

05 Killed half the world

The plague reappeared intermittently across two centuries, affecting Asia, North Africa, Arabia and Europe. Death estimates range from 25 to 50 million – the latter would have been perhaps half of the world's population at the time. Curiously, the Justinian Plague became a 'dead end'; its strain didn't survive to the modern day.

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DUNKIRK



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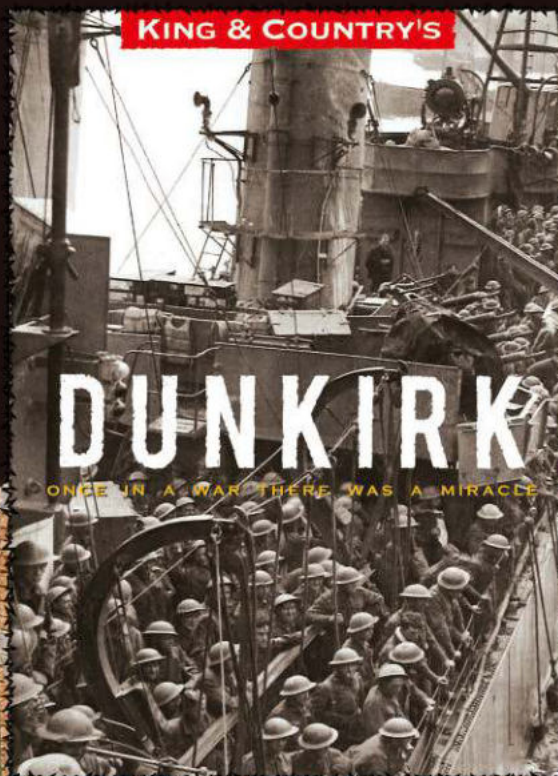


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Hitler and the Occult



Hitler and the Occult

The runes, rituals and star signs behind the rise and fall of the Third Reich

Written by James Hoare

The Nazis were desperate," intones John Hurt's Professor Brutenholm in Guillermo del Toro's 2004 dark fantasy film, *Hellboy*. "Combining science and black magic, they intended to upset the balance of the war."

From box office to bookshelves, the image of Nazi Germany being in league with black magic and old gods is ubiquitous. Though best characterised by the retro pulp of the *Indiana Jones* series where the adventurous archaeologist races to keep relics from the pursuing jackboots, it's a far more long-lived trope than you might think.

A handful of early texts advanced the theory during the early days of World War II. *Hitler Speaks* (1939) by Hermann Rauschning, *Occult Causes of the Present War* (1940) by Lewis Spence and *Hitler et les Forces Occultes* (*Hitler at the Occult Forces*, 1939) by Edouard Saby all portrayed the Führer as a man driven by the demonic forces he could barely contain to one degree or another.

None of these writers had any insider knowledge. Rauschning leveraged his credibility

as a former middle-ranking Nazi to greatly embellish his contact and conversations with Hitler. Spence was a Scottish folklorist and writer who projected his own occult knowledge onto the mystical manifestos of Hitler's fellow travellers. Saby was even further gone, seeing evidence of occult hand gestures in the Führer's photographs and equating vegetarianism with Satanism.

Facts that thin soon gave way to fiction and Dennis Wheatley wrote the supernatural thriller *Strange Conflict* in 1941, which told of Nazi witch doctors menacing the Atlantic convoys from South America. The Stephen King of his day, Wheatley rubbed velvet shoulders with English occultists such as Aleister Crowley and Montague Summers, and spent the war working for the London Controlling Section, a part of the byzantine British intelligence apparatus concerned with elaborate deception campaigns.

After the war, Wheatley's novels *They Used Dark Forces* (1964) and *Gateway to Hell* (1970) helped to keep the concept in the public imagination, leading to the first *Indiana Jones* movie, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), and from

that into an endless parade of Nazi zombie movies and credulous cable shows exploring the Third Reich's myriad magical mysteries.

Why these stories endured then and why they endure now is largely the same. In 1939-40, the seemingly unstoppable advance of Nazi Germany as it rolled over its neighbours was difficult to understand without recourse to dark powers. In the aftermath of World War II, the horrific scale of the Holocaust, the devastation of aerial bombardment and the savagery of occupation defied easy understanding. Again, many took comfort in the belief that this wasn't the work of people like themselves, but of monsters whose dark appetites drove them to seek out forbidden lore.

At its heart, though, is a kernel of truth and interest in the esoteric was surprisingly widespread in Nazi Germany. While the idea of a gimlet-eyed Führer driven by occult obsessions is absolute rubbish, the occult was indelibly bound up with Nazi Germany. It was a low hum of astrology, superstition, runes and mythology that underpinned 12 years in which the swastika fluttered above Berlin.

The twilight of reason

THE SPIRITUALISTS AND SECRET SOCIETIES AT THE BIRTH OF THE NAZIS

Across Europe and North America, the turn of the century represented the flowering of superstitious thought. This was the product of spiritual anxiety — people felt lost in this unstable new world and nowhere was this more obvious than in Germany.

Hot on the heels of their seemingly incomprehensible defeat in World War I came the economic mismanagement and political instability of the Weimar Republic, bringing with it running street battles between far left and far right, and

hyperinflation — an unnecessary head start for the race to the bottom that was the Great Depression. What granted this febrile atmosphere a uniquely dangerous quality was the relationship between nationalism, anti-Semitism and the supernatural.

Still a new country with myriad dialects and regional identities, significant Slavic and Jewish minorities and a volatile confessional faultline between the Protestant north and the Catholic south, Germany had only become unified under

one flag in 1871, while Austria remained part of the 'German world' but not a part of the country itself. In short, the question of what it was to be 'a German' hadn't really been resolved.

The soundtrack to this combative nationalism was undoubtedly Richard Wagner. In 1869, the first part of what would become his epic *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of Nibelungen*) was staged in Munich. Conceived as a break from the Italian-style operas of his earlier career, *Nibelungen* crafted a new shared mythology out of pre-Christian Norse and Germanic folktales. Although widely admired, amid these thunderous chords was plenty that the emerging German far right could embrace: a heroic masculine ideal overcoming duplicitous foes, spiritual purity versus greedy materialism, and sheer bloody righteousness.

Another spiritual bonding agent for this fractured nation was the *völkisch* movement that emerged over the 19th century, emphasising the spiritual purity of German peasant life and folklore that had become corrupted by urbanisation and Christianity. For *völkisch* thinkers, theirs was an exclusive creed: Blut und Boden (Blood and Soil). German soil and German blood were linked, and to be German you had to be descended from this pre-industrial pagan idyll that their cherry-picking of history had contrived.

In 1903, the hoary Austrian occultist Guido von List (and his acolyte Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels) popularised a new theory that bound this sense of longing and bubbling hatred into a potent new form: Arisosophy, or Armanism. An active contributor to *völkisch* journals on the subject of ancient runes (he created the 18-letter Armanen Futharkh later used by the SS) and his own Odin-worshipping cult, List believed that all the great figures in history and legend were Aryans whose golden age had been ended by the onset of inferior races and cultures.

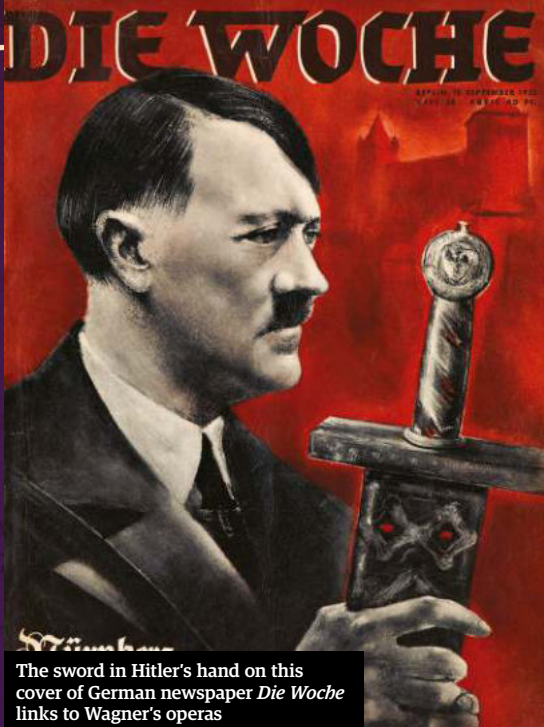
List and Liebenfels identified Atlantis — an object of particular fascination for 19th-century occultists — with the mythical North Atlantic island civilisation of Thule, postulating that the ancient Aryans had been scattered from there following a catastrophic flood, with the purest bloodlines of this spiritual Aryan super race settling in Germany and the Himalayas.

Now German meant Aryan, and those of insufficient 'Aryan blood' — Jews and Slavs, for example — were seen as an existential threat to the *völk*. Purely by existing, *völkisch* fanatics believed that these 'lesser races' were poisoning the sacred union of their ancient culture and land. This broiling stew of heroic mythology that followed Wagner, the imagined pagan past and virulent racism of the

"To be Germany you had to be descended from this pre-industrial pagan idyll that their cherry-picking of history had contrived"

NSDAP propaganda from 1932 depicts Communism as a supernatural foe





The sword in Hitler's hand on this cover of German newspaper *Die Woche* links to Wagner's operas



Many high-ranking members of the Nazi Party believed in the idea of Blut und Boden: 'Blood and Soil'



Blut und Boden called for rural values and the preserving of farming communities



A pagan shrine in Germany for those following the Norse gods

völkisch movement, and myriad other occult fascinations that bloomed in this hothouse of unreason — from numerology and astrology to dowsing rods and homeopathy — were the engine that drove a significant chunk of the German right. Crucially, these strands of thought electrified many who would go on to take their place by Hitler's side following his seizure of power in 1933.

Deputy Führer Rudolf Hess and the notorious governor general of occupied Poland, Hans Frank, were both members of the Thule Society, which grew out of the obscure völkisch Germanenorden (German Order) and Reichshammerbund (Reich Hammer Association). Frustrated by their lack of electoral success, the Thule Society entrusted right-wing journalist Karl Harrer with the task of shearing their hateful creed of its occult tics and taking it to the working class. The eventual result was the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (German Worker's Party), co-founded in 1919 by Harrer and Dietrich Eckart.

As the DAP transitioned to the NSDAP (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, or the National Socialist German Worker's Party) in 1920 under charismatic new frontman and Eckart protégé Adolf Hitler, they broke their links with the Thule Society and booted out Harrer, having

drawn away members, support and even the official newspaper, *Völkischer Beobachter* (People's Observer), from their one-time sponsors.

Minister of Food Richard Walther Darré, Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Höss, Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth) leader Baldur von Schirach and Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler all met in the extreme völkisch Artaman League, which formed in 1923. The Artaman preached a retreat from cities and Christianity, and into farmsteads and solstice festivals. They looked to Eastern Europe for "German soil" to "reclaim" and violently opposed the Slavic presence in Germany's ethnically mixed eastern borderlands. Like the Thule Society, the League was soon swallowed up by the rise of NSDAP and by 1927, an estimated 80 per cent of their membership had joined Hitler.

While in the grand scheme of Weimar Germany's tempestuous political scene the likes of the Thule Society and the Artaman League were little more than racist social clubs for middle-class dilettantes, the NSDAP was a mass movement that spoke to the fears of the German working class. It promised jobs, stability, economic good times, victory over enemies within and without and a new world on their own terms. It may have been coached in the

rhetoric of good and evil, destiny and the völk — describing Jews in the terminology of the vampire and Hitler in the language of the saviour — but these were subordinate to political realities.

Hitler himself had very little contact with the occult fringes of the German far right and, indeed, esoteric sects began to be shut down from 1933 and the more outspoken activists — "völkisch wandering scholars", in Hitler's own words — were silenced.

For the Führer, the supernatural was a prop, a way of encapsulating and manipulating that desire for something better, stronger, more self-assured that many ordinary Germans felt at the time. He embraced the imagery of Wagner, seeing himself as his heroic protagonist Siegfried, and identified with the archetype of the 'magician' or the 'prophet' — but these were costumes to be worn on the political stage.

Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung best encapsulated the supernatural aura of Hitler's presentation, saying in 1942: "He is the loudspeaker which magnifies the inaudible whispers of the German soul until they can be heard by the German's conscious ear [...] Hitler's power is not political; it is *magic*."

Fortune tellers & the Third Reich

NAZI GERMANY NEVER REALLY SETTLED ON AN OFFICIAL POSITION WHEN IT CAME TO ASTROLOGY, AND THAT STARTED RIGHT AT THE TOP

THE DREAM QUEST OF RUDOLF HESS

Pushed to the fringes of the Third Reich and anxious about the coming war with the Soviet Union, Hess set upon the idea of a desperate peace mission to Britain that would put him back in the Führer's good graces.

With his astrologer Ernst Schulte Strathaus having advised him of the optimum departure date for a mission of peace, on 10 May 1941 – just over a month before the start of Operation Barbarossa – Hess set off alone on a night flight to Scotland in his personal Messerschmitt Bf 110. Crash landing and taken into custody, British intelligence quickly realised that not only were Hess' pleas for peace a cheque that couldn't be cashed, but the Deputy Führer wasn't entirely stable. Over the long incarceration that followed, Hess raged that his food was been poisoned, attempted suicide and admitted that the idea for his flight had come to him in a dream.

Back in Berlin, Hitler was furious. Egged on by Bormann and Rosenberg, who blamed the advice of astrologers for this betrayal, Hitler authorised the 'Hess Action'. On 9 June 1941, Heydrich began a mass round-up of astrologers, psychics and faith healers. Hundreds were arrested, thousands of occult books seized and Schulte Strathaus disappeared into a concentration camp for two years.

Much to the frustration of Rosenberg, Heydrich put the focus on re-education, a relatively benign response given the wanton terror that the Gestapo had visited on the other ideological enemies of the Reich. Many of those interned were eventually released. Either Heydrich had given up pushing against Himmler's indulgence of the supernatural, or, with the impending war in the east, he simply felt the resources of the Reich Main Security Office were better spent elsewhere.

RUDOLF HESS
DEPUTY FÜHRER
(1933-41)

One of Hitler's most devoted early followers, Hess became increasingly marginalised and outmanoeuvred by more accomplished political big beasts, including his own secretary. The Deputy Führer allegedly used a pendulum to decide whether letters were sent by allies or enemies and regularly solicited advice from astrologers.

The most prolific patron of occultists in Nazi Germany, Himmler relied upon his personal astrologer Wilhelm Wulff so heavily towards the end of the war that Walter Schellenberg, chief of SD-Ausland (foreign intelligence), found it easier to seek orders from the "court magician" than the "king".

HEINRICH HIMMLER
REICHSFÜHRER-SS
(1929-45)

THE STARS ARE OUR SECRET WEAPON

With secret British innovations such as radar, sonar and Bletchley Park codebreaking turning the tables on the German U-boat menace in the Atlantic, the German Navy was at a loss to explain this reversal of fortunes. Inevitably, superstition flourished in ignorance and, at the suggestion of U-boat captain Hans Roeder, the MND (Marine Nachrichten Dienst; Naval Intelligence Service) authorised the establishment of the Pendulum Institute in Berlin.

Roeder's rogues gallery included the likes of Karl Krafft, briefly released from prison for the job, astrologer Wilhelm Wulff and dowser Ludwig Straniak. This was the first officially sanctioned use of authentic astrology in the Third Reich (Goebbels wasn't genuinely soliciting horoscopes, after all), but it wouldn't be the last. When the navy eventually lost patience in the Pendulum Institute, many of its beneficiaries found work with the SS. Wulff in particular would claim to be at the heart of an unlikely tale: Operation Mars.

By August 1943, Benito Mussolini had been overthrown and imprisoned by the Italian government, who were looking for an early exit from the war. Retrieving the deposed dictator was of paramount importance to keeping fascist Italy fighting and so Himmler ordered around 40 astrologers, diviners and dowzers to be released from concentration camps and put to work in a villa conjuring the defeated dictator's whereabouts. Their prize would be freedom plus a million Reichsmarks, but swapping the cruel camp regime for Himmler's luxurious pile was more than enough.

Eventually, though, Mussolini was located and retrieved in a daring mission led by the infamous Otto Skorzeny on 12 September 1943. Himmler was overjoyed with the tremendous success of Operation Mars and, although the intelligence gathering behind the op was very much the traditional kind, nobody had it in them to convince him otherwise.



BELIEVERS



MARTIN BORMANN

SECRETARY TO THE DEPUTY
FÜHRER (1932-41)
CHIEF OF THE PARTY
CHANCELLERY
(1941-45)

Despite being subordinate to Hess on paper, Bormann managed everything from the Führer's personal finances to civil service appointments within the German government. He was an immensely influential political operator who controlled access to Hitler and had little patience for the occult. This antipathy to both astrology and his increasingly irrelevant boss led him to spur on the Hess Action of 1941.

ADOLF HITLER

CHANCELLOR OF
GERMANY
(1933-45)

Though sympathetic to the power of superstition to make or break a leader, Hitler claimed to have no interest in astrology. Speaking in July 1942, the Führer observed: "Although an oracle's prophecies may be wrong a hundred times (when they are promptly forgotten), it suffices for one prophecy to be fortuitously confirmed by subsequent events, for it to be believed, cherished and handed down from generation to generation."

ALFRED ROSENBERG

COMMISSAR FOR SUPERVISION
OF INTELLECTUAL AND
IDEOLOGICAL EDUCATION
OF THE NSDAP
(1934-45)

Hitler's ideological Rottweiler, Rosenberg was responsible for the letter of Nazi doctrine in matters of culture. Although the depth of his occult interests rivalled Hess and Himmler, he had no tolerance for belief systems that countered the letter of National Socialist writ and regularly fought turf wars with Himmler.

REINHARD HEYDRICH

DIRECTOR OF THE GESTAPO
(1934-39)
DIRECTOR OF THE REICH
MAIN SECURITY OFFICE
(1939-42)

Heydrich was tasked with shutting down sects, mystics and fortune tellers who represented a threat to Nazi orthodoxy, a mission made more complex by Himmler, who encouraged him to police the arbitrary distinction between "scientific" and "fraudulent astrologers". Many of those pursued by the SD (Sicherheitsdienst, the intelligence wing of the SS) or Gestapo would find protection under Himmler or, from late 1939, Goebbels.

"Goebbels began building a team of astrologers who could influence public opinion on his behalf"

JOSEPH GOEBBELS

MINISTER OF PUBLIC
ENLIGHTENMENT AND
PROPAGANDA
(1933-45)

The pragmatic propaganda minister banned publishing horoscopes of prominent political figures outright and later banned public fortune telling, but he understood the value of astrology in shaping opinion. Ever the arch-cynic, Goebbels published anti-occultist literature on the one hand, but eventually recruited his own astrologers to churn out politically sanctioned prophecy on the other.

PREDICT FOR VICTORY

Defying the ban on predictions involving the Reich leadership, the Swiss-born astrologer Karl Krafft sent an urgent letter to a friend with SS connections warning that Hitler's life was in danger between 7 and 10 November 1939. When the Führer narrowly escaped a bomb by minutes on 8 November, Krafft was hauled in by the Gestapo as a potential accomplice. Eventually they released him, convinced his apparent foreknowledge was nothing sinister.

Goebbels, though, was fascinated. Seeing that the British had begun broadcasting bogus horoscopes to erode the confidence of the German public, Goebbels began building a team of astrologers who could influence public opinion on his behalf. Krafft took centre stage as work began on pamphlets based around reinterpreting the 16th-century prophecies of Nostradamus to trumpet a preordained German victory and spread them across Europe.

Goebbels was delighted, writing triumphantly of the fatalism that his work was inspiring in France, but Krafft's self-respect was bruised. He grew increasingly belligerent and was unwilling to toe the line and compromise on his craft, as he saw it. He resigned, although his work continued to be printed regardless, and Goebbels' team of tame astrologers produced hundreds of books, pamphlets and radio broadcasts until 1943, falsely convinced that the British public were as enthralled by astrology as their German counterparts.

Out from under the protection of the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, Krafft fell firmly back under the crosshairs of the Gestapo and, unable to keep his mouth shut about the Third Reich's chances as the stars relayed them to him, he was picked up in the Hess Action. In

and out of prison and concentration camps for the rest of the war, Krafft eventually died of typhus on 8 January 1945 while in a boxcar to Buchenwald.



SCEPTICS



The dark culture of the SS

HIMMLER'S STATE-WITHIN-A-STATE WAS FILLED WITH OUTLANDISH OCCULTISTS AND PROJECTS

Heinrich Himmler's political upbringing in the esoteric Artaman League permeated his many endeavours. Once he was handed control of the Schutzstaffel (Protection Squad) responsible for the security of the party's elite in 1929, he set about transforming the SS from bloody-knuckled, Weimar-era street brawlers into a militant order inspired by the Teutonic Knights who brought Germanic sword and fire to the dark forests and mountains of the Baltic.

While most of Himmler's occult predilections initially played out behind closed doors, in one way at least it was worn on his sleeve. SS insignia, from the infamous double lightning flash to the emblems of various units and formations, came from Guido von List's runic alphabet.

As wider German society became steadily hostile to the more maverick mystics, Himmler welcomed them with open arms and set them to work. The Ahnenerbe — more properly the Forschungsund Lehrgemeinschaft das Ahnenerbe (Ancestral Research and Teaching Society) — was formed under a different name in 1935, before being gradually absorbed into the SS.

Concerned with research into the mythic origins of Aryans and recovering or recreating their knowledge, the Ahnenerbe ballooned into a vast apparatus with departments covering research areas as niche as Hausmarken und Sippenzeichen (House Brands and Family Marks), Wurtenforschung (Dwelling Mound Research), Indogermanische Rechtsgeschichte (Indogermanic Historical jurisprudence) and Volkserzählung, Märchen und Sagenkunde (Folktales, Fairytales and Myths). Unsurprisingly, its manager Wolfram Sievers was a veteran of the Artaman League.

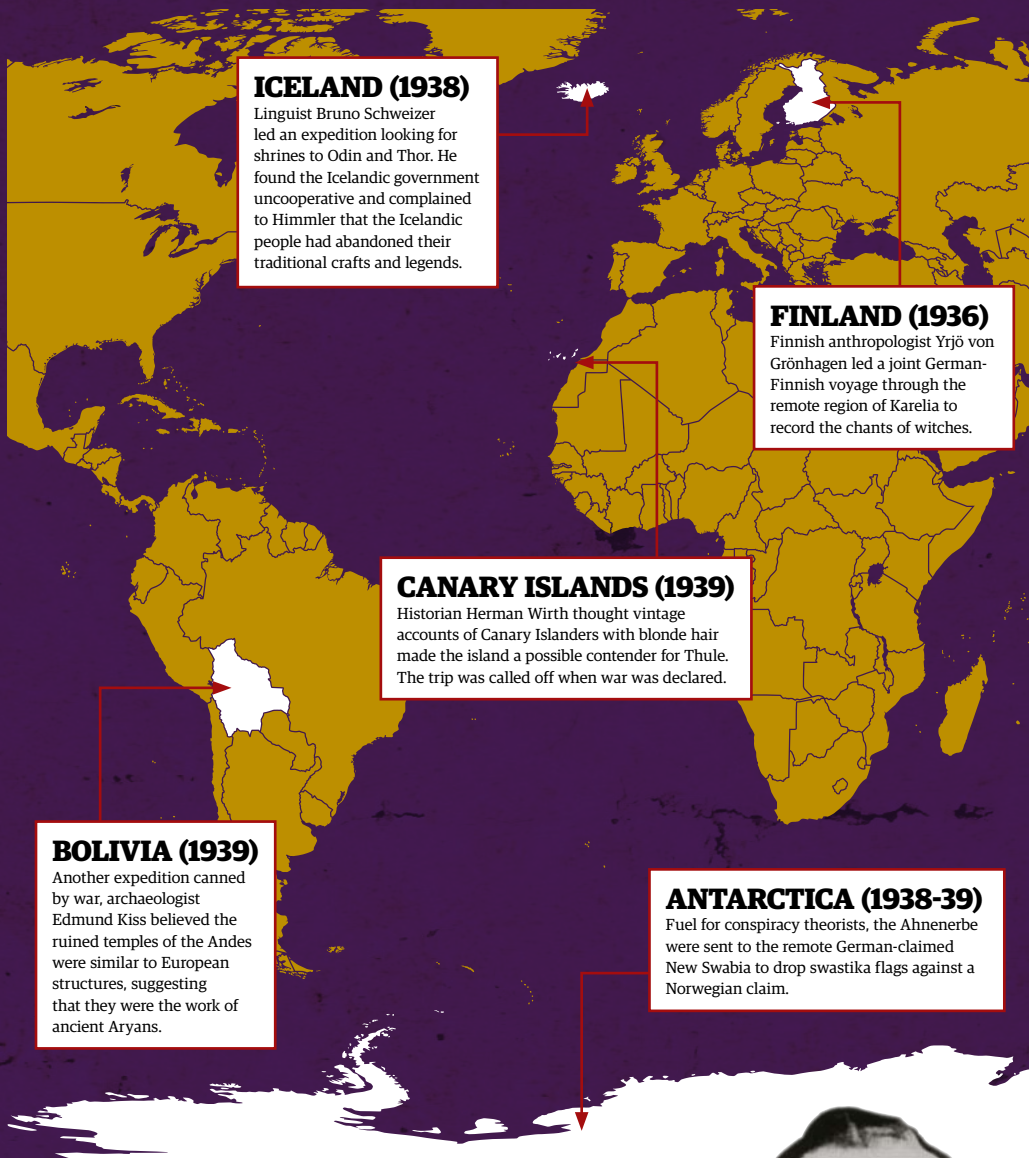
Perhaps its most sensationalist endeavour, though, was the 1938-39 expedition to Tibet. A fact-finding trip into the spurious shared heritage of the other 'pure' Aryan culture to have survived the catastrophic sinking of Atlantis/Thule, its leader, the square-jawed Bear Grylls of Nazi Germany Ernst Schäfer, consulted Himmler's mystic mentor Karl Maria Wiligut before his departure. He left convinced that Wiligut had read his mind using techniques only known to the Tibetan lamas.

The expedition was a masterpiece in confirmation bias as Schäfer's team — who held a winter solstice rite when they arrived — returned laden down with artefacts and holy books, convinced of the shared Aryan heritage of National Socialism and the Tibetan Buddhism.

So pleased was Himmler with the scope and scale of his organisation's output that

Join the Ahnenerbe, see the world!

THEY DIDN'T JUST GO TO TIBET, THEY TRAVELLED THE GLOBE IN THE NAME OF ANCESTRAL RESEARCH



ICELAND (1938)

Linguist Bruno Schweizer led an expedition looking for shrines to Odin and Thor. He found the Icelandic government uncooperative and complained to Himmler that the Icelandic people had abandoned their traditional crafts and legends.

FINLAND (1936)

Finnish anthropologist Yrjö von Grönghagen led a joint German-Finnish voyage through the remote region of Karelia to record the chants of witches.

CANARY ISLANDS (1939)

Historian Herman Wirth thought vintage accounts of Canary Islanders with blonde hair made the island a possible contender for Thule. The trip was called off when war was declared.

BOLIVIA (1939)

Another expedition canned by war, archaeologist Edmund Kiss believed the ruined temples of the Andes were similar to European structures, suggesting that they were the work of ancient Aryans.

ANTARCTICA (1938-39)

Fuel for conspiracy theorists, the Ahnenerbe were sent to the remote German-claimed New Swabia to drop swastika flags against a Norwegian claim.

THE RASPUTIN OF THE REICH

By Himmler's side from late 1933 to his retirement in summer 1939 aged 72 was Karl Maria Wiligut. A one-time Austrian asylum patient, although the SS kept records of his mental health tightly under wraps lest they expose their boss to ridicule, Wiligut claimed direct descent from a line of prehistoric German sages created by a coupling of Asen (air) and Wanen (water) gods — the Aesir and Vanir in Norse mythology.

Along with the ancient rites he had inherited from his father and his father's father, Wiligut boasted of a "clairvoyant memory" that allowed him to channel ancestral wisdom. In one particularly lurid incident, he was driving with Himmler when suddenly he began to fit. Foaming at the mouth, he lurched from the car and into a nearby field. Lucid again, Wiligut announced that this was a site sacred to the ancient Germans.





The SS lead a solstice festival in Berlin

RAIDER OF THE LOST GRAIL

A passionate historian of Medieval grail lore often referred to as the "real Indiana Jones", Otto Rahn was lured into the SS inner circle by Willigut on the strength of his widely read 1933 book *Kreuzzug gegen den Gral* (*Crusade Towards the Grail*), which spread the idea that the 13th-century Cathar heresy was in fact the remnants of a Germanic pagan cult.

Rahn was particularly taken with accounts of three Cathar knights slipping over the walls of the doomed Montségur Castle with the Holy Grail — the cup used to catch the blood of Christ at his crucifixion, believed by Rahn to be a pre-Christian relic that fell from the sky — in a sack and travelled to the Languedoc region of southern France to explore the subterranean passages used by the Cathars.

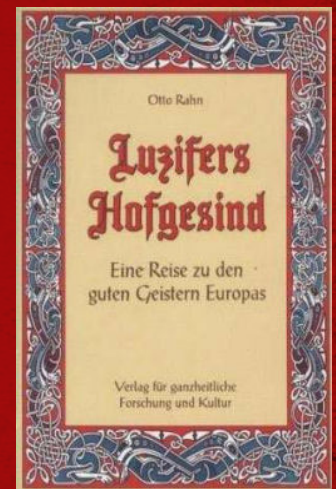
Himmler loved Rahn's work so much he committed it to memory and signed off a 1,000-Reichsmark a month stipend for Rahn to work on his next book. Rahn took on SS rank and uniform to better ingratiate himself with his new patrons. As an openly gay man he should have been on his guard, but his obsession with finding the Holy Grail blinded him to all else. Only when his 'sequel' *Lucifers Hofgesind* (*Lucifer's Court*) appeared in 1937 with anti-Semitic passages crudely inserted by another hand, did Rahn perhaps realise

the monster that his efforts were feeding. Himmler, for his part, was delighted with *Lucifer's Court*, which linked the Cathar heresy to wider witchcraft cults through the figure of Lucifer — the Devil — here a pagan bringer of light demonised by the Christian

Church, and ordered 5,000 copies bound in leather to be presented to the Nazi elite. Hitler was even given one for his birthday.

Punished for a drunken scrape with a three-month tour of duty on the staff of Dachau concentration camp, Rahn was horrified by what he saw and naïvely tried to resign his commission. Rumours of his sexuality and possible Jewish heritage were beginning to make the rounds.

While stories vary on the exact chain of events, some say his resignation was refused and a solution that better suited the Reichsführer-SS was proposed. Either way, in March 1939, 34-year-old Rahn climbed a snow-covered slope in Austria's Tyrol mountains and was found dead the following morning, his lifeless eyes staring out across the serene landscape.



Ernst Schäfer during the Tibetan expedition

"As custodians of Aryan superiority whose work fed the ideological engine that drove the Holocaust, the Ahnenerbe found themselves on the frontline"

he presented Hitler with a set of leather-bound volumes recording the great Ahnenerbe discoveries on his 50th birthday.

Despite the all-consuming growth of Ahnenerbe, Himmler's voracious hunger for occultish knowledge also led to the eye-catching Hexen-Sonderauftrag (Special Assignment — Witches), or H-Sonderkommando (H-Special unit), which ultimately found itself concerned with cataloguing lore and artefacts relating to witch trials and hunts.

They managed to fill a detailed library of reference cards — the Hexenkartothek — with accounts of lusty Germanic pagans facing off against the feeble-minded Church. Despite having some overlapping areas of interest, they avoided being absorbed by the Ahnenerbe by 'discovering' that Himmler was a direct descendent of Margareth

Himmler, a woman who was burnt alive as a witch in 1629.

It's important to remember that this seemingly ridiculous obsession with chronicling an imagined past of magical rituals and storybook heroes was part of an ideology of unrivalled venom and intent. Himmler's genocidal campaign in the wake of Operation Barbarossa — cleansing the east of Jews, Roma and Sinti, communists and a bloody swathe of the Slavic population in preparation for German colonists — was a dark dream drawn from his days in the Artaman League. As custodians of Aryan superiority whose work fed the ideological engine that drove the Holocaust, the Ahnenerbe found themselves on the frontline.

Archaeologist Hans Schleif was given custody of Ahnenerbe's activities in occupied Poland,

plundering Polish treasures from the Warsaw Archaeological Museum and looting Jewish homes in the country. The anthropologist from the Tibet expedition, Bruno Beger, procured skeletons for racial categorisation, selecting an estimated 100 prisoners from concentration camps for murder and study. Finally, folklorist Alfred Karasek took control of the resettlement of Germans in Ukraine and ultimately became an active participant in mass murder and population clearance.





Himmler's Nazi Camelot

INSIDE NEWELSBURG CASTLE, THE SS'S MONUMENT TO MYSTICISM

With the SS increasingly retreating into a world of its own, distinct even from the collective madness of the Third Reich, Himmler hit upon the 17th-century Wewelsburg Castle in Westphalia as the perfect inner sanctum for his unholy order.

The castle was appropriated for the ideological indoctrination of the SS Race and Settlement Office in 1934 under the esoteric influence of Willigut Himmler. He began to envisage it as a tribute to Henry the Fowler, a 10th-century German ruler reimagined by Wagner in his opera *Lohengrin* as the first great pan-Germanic hero, uniting the nation against the Hungarians. Himmler believed himself to be the reincarnation of Henry.

While Himmler's loyal lieutenants held pseudo-pagan rites, celebrating weddings and solstices

alike in an imagined Germanic tradition, millions of Reichsmarks were sunk into renovating and redecorating the castle. A concentration camp was opened nearby to provide a labour force and the Ahnenerbe became glorified interior designers as rooms were named after great German rulers and filled with related artwork, artefacts and armour, both stolen and bought.

The castle's two showstopping features were testament to Himmler's mythic pretensions: a pseudo-Arthurian round table for the SS elite and a vast hall, the floor adorned with a jagged 'black sun' that glorified in the deeds of dead SS-Gruppenführer (SS-group leaders), who would be ritualistically cremated and stored in one of seven urns in the vault below.

Similarly, the personalised SS-Ehrenring (SS-honour rings, also called Totenkopfring, or 'death's head rings'), designed to signal membership of the inner circle of Himmler's order, were returned here for storage upon the owner's death, creating an eternal brotherhood linked in death as they were in life by the twisted ideals of the genocidal Schutzstaffel.

Plans compiled across 1940 and 1942, set aside as the tide of war turned against the Third Reich, provide for the entire relocation of the nearby village and a vast complex spilling out over a kilometre on a wheel of towers and curtain walls.

In 1945, as the US Army advanced, Himmler ordered Wewelsburg to be razed rather than see his sacred temple profaned. In the end, it was only partly destroyed but damaged enough to inspire mystery and invite questions that cannot be easily answered. Wewelsburg became a subject of fascination in the 1970s, a Nazi 'Camelot' of occult mysteries and secretive rituals.

"Millions of Reichsmarks were sunk into renovating and redecorating the castle"

THE BLACK SUN

Now nearly as potent in its toxicity as the swastika, the black sun wasn't widely used by the Third Reich, appearing only on the floor of Wewelsburg's 'hall of heroes'. Composed of a sunwheel — one of the traditional symbols of Germanic paganism — and 12 single sig runes radiating outwards, the black sun was an astrological body whose power, according to Himmler's occult mentor, Karl Maria Willigut, could be harnessed through yoga.



Honour Among Thieves

Designed by Willigut and initially presented only to senior officers, the SS-Ehrenring was a personal gift from Himmler and signified the bearer's membership of an 'elite' within the SS. It was to be worn on the left hand ring finger and returned upon death, dismissal or retirement.

Oak leaves

A feature on older Prussian military decorations, oak leaves symbolised regeneration and were incorporated into the Knight's Cross medal and onto gravestones during the Third Reich to displace Christian imagery

Sig rune

A single 'lightning bolt' in a triangle, symbolising victory from which we get the Nazi salute 'Sieg Heil' or 'Heil Victory'.

All that glitters

As well as being silver, SS-Ehrenring are rare. According to rumour, the castle's stock of honour rings — around 9,280 — were sealed in a nearby cave with dynamite, capturing the imagination of treasure hunters for over half a century.

Inscription

The recipient's name, Himmler's signature and the date it was awarded were engraved on the interior of the ring.

Totenkopf rune

The 'death's head' of the SS, symbolising, of course, death or valour in the face of death. Like the oak leaves, it was also used by the Prussian army.



Weird War II

SOME OF THE MOST HEADLINE-GRABBING PROJECTS ATTRIBUTED TO THE NAZIS ARE SIMPLY NONSENSE

SECRET MAP TO THE GRAIL SEIZED

Hitler's henchmen loot the Ghent Altarpiece

Hubert and Jan van Eyck's 15th-century *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb*, often referred to as the Ghent Altarpiece for its pride of place at Ghent Cathedral, is one of the most important pieces of Christian artwork in Europe and Hitler *had* to have it. One key panel shows a lamb bleeding into the Holy Grail, signifying the elaborate polyptych's true role —

a secret map to the sacred vessel.

Hitler's interest in the Ghent Altarpiece was political as well as artistic. Aside from being a work he hugely admired, it was one of the artworks returned to Belgium in the

Treaty of Versailles and he felt it rightfully belonged to the Reich.



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THE DEVIL INSIDE DER FÜHRER

Adolf Hitler's evil inspired by demonic possession

Surely acts that murderous could only come from Lucifer himself? Former far-right politician Hermann Rauschning's 1939 biography of the Führer paints a troubling portrait of a man plagued by demonic voices. Hitler himself underlined "He who does not have the demonic seed within himself will never give birth to a magical world" in his personal copy of Ernst

Schertel's *Magic: History, Theory and Practice*.

Rauschning embellished his contact with Hitler considerably, publishing his book to meet the growing interest in Germany's new master. As for the "demon seed", Hitler's enthusiasm for Schertel was purely symbolic — a magician was someone who changed the world through sheer force of will.

UNHOLY HITLER WIELDS HOLY LANCE

It pierced the side of Christ and led Adolf to victory

The fabled Spear of Longinus, reputed to have pierced the side of Christ at the Crucifixion, was seized from Vienna's treasury by the Nazis during the Anschluss. Hitler used its otherworldly powers, harnessed by the great German warrior kings of the past, to steamroller most of Europe.

The story surfaced in a 1972 book by Trevor Ravenscroft, who claimed to have studied under Austrian occultist and Grail writer Walter Stein. It later transpired the two had never met and Ravenscroft contacted Stein after his death in a seance. Meanwhile, Vienna's Habsburg Spear dates from the 7th century CE — well after its cameo in the New Testament.



MAGICIAN MENTORS A MONSTER

Aleister Crowley fed the Führer hallucinogens and taught him everything he knew



Crowley's magical manifesto *The Book of the Law* was translated into German in 1925, catching the eye of Adolf Hitler. Translator Martha Kuntzel observed the similarities between the text and Hitler's own declaration of dark faith, *Mein Kampf*. Crowley tried to contact Hitler around 1930 to induct him into Thelema and he annotated a copy of Kuntzel's 1939 book *Hitler Speaks* with the commonalities.

In reality, this bromance was all rather one-sided. There's no evidence that Hitler was aware of Crowley's writings, and by the time *The Book of the Law* was released in Germany, the future Führer's worldview was firmly established.

Time Traveller's Handbook

RENAISSANCE

FLORENCE

Florence, Italy, 1434-1537

There are few more exciting places to visit than the Florentine Republic in the 15th century. Having recovered from the Black Death, Florence is a boomtown for international banking and trade. Its rich merchant families give generous patronage to the arts, supporting the likes of Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Donatello, Botticelli and Niccolo Machiavelli. This has placed Florence at the forefront of a rebirth in European cultural life, which has largely been stagnant since the Roman Empire's fall. In fact, proud locals even describe their city as the 'New Rome'.

Be warned, however: Renaissance Florence is as much a place of plots and political intrigue as it is art and beauty. The great families have become political factions that vie for power, occasionally leading to violence in the streets. Florence's tremendous wealth also makes it attractive to foreign powers, having clashed with Milan and Naples in recent years, and there are French and Spanish invasions on the horizon.



FIG.01

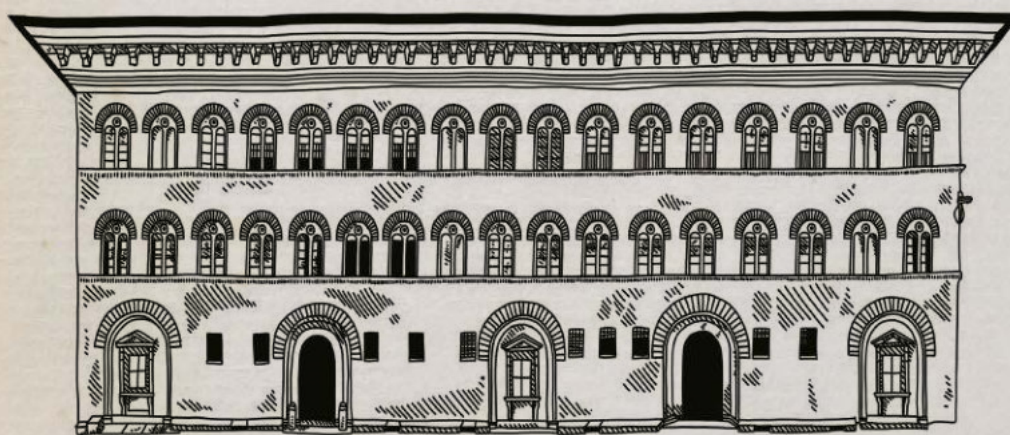


FIG.02

WHERE TO STAY

From the majestic dome of the city's cathedral to the Pitti Palace to the Basilica of San Lorenzo, Renaissance Florence is full of architectural delights that will last for centuries. This is in part due to the wealthy families' lavish patronage attracting skilled architects, but also the local marble quarries supplying them with a ready source of fine stone to work with. This makes it hard to choose just one place to stay in Florence. However, for sheer proximity to the centre of power, the Medici Palace would be hard to beat.

Dos & don'ts

✓ Appreciate your surroundings. You are in one of the most vibrant and stimulating artistic environments the world has ever seen – try to enjoy it.

✓ Keep an open mind. Long-established principles that have been upheld by the Church for centuries are now being challenged for the first time.

✓ Make some money. While Florence suffers from large discrepancies in wealth, you can still get rich as a merchant.

✓ Be wary of inadvertently provoking violence. This is a city of high passions and simmering underlying tensions.

✗ Get drawn into plots, conspiracies and schemes. Getting involved in any political factionalism risks trouble.

✗ Speak French. Due to international tensions, talking in any other language beyond the Tuscan dialect will make the locals suspicious of you.

✗ Speak out against the Medicis. The ruling family may seem benevolent, but any public opposition will be quickly stamped out.

✗ Hesitate to report any signs of French forces intervening in the city. Florence's current prosperity is certainly attracting foreign interest.

WHO TO BEFRIEND

Lorenzo de' Medici

No man wields more influence in late 15th-century Florence than Lorenzo the Magnificent. The latest head of the Medici clan, his family control the largest bank in Europe, even acting as personal bankers to the pope. Lorenzo's grandfather, Cosimo, parlayed their wealth into political power, making the Medicis the virtual rulers of Florence. Lorenzo, famous for his intelligence, was negotiating contracts with the papacy from the age of 17. Raised as a statesman rather than a banker, he rules benevolently – patronising the arts and bankrolling festivals – while further concentrating the republic's power into his own hands.

Extra tip: Artists seeking patronage from Lorenzo should not be overly concerned with realism. Notoriously ugly, Lorenzo has a long flattened nose with no sense of smell, his heavy jaw juts forward so his lower lip almost covers the upper and his eyebrows are bumpy. Unsurprisingly, none of his portraits depict any of this.

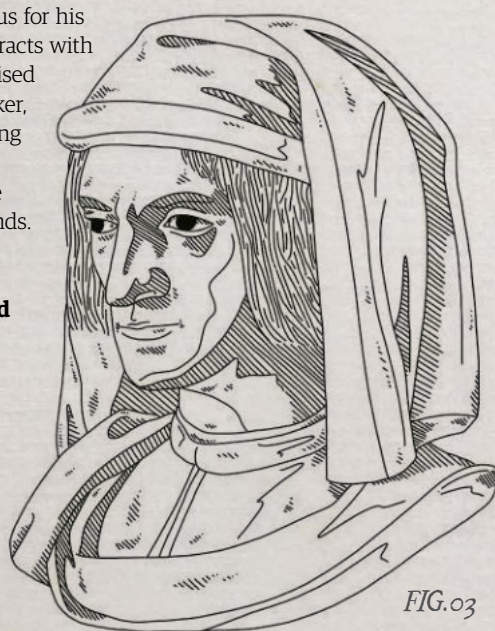


FIG.03

WHO TO AVOID

Jacopo de' Pazzi

The aristocratic de' Pazzis are fabulously wealthy, but not as rich as the upstart Medicis and lack their political clout. To try and seize power for his family, head of the household, Jacopo, has conspired with Pope Sixtus IV to kill Lorenzo during Easter Mass on 26 April 1478. However, only Lorenzo's brother Giuliano will die and Florence will rally around Lorenzo, further strengthening his position. Jacopo, his relative Francesco and the priests who will assist them will be executed. The rest of the de' Pazzis will be exiled and their coat of arms suppressed forever more.



FIG.04

Helpful skills

Being an artist isn't the only way to get ahead in Florence. Perfect the following skills to prosper



FIG.05

Salesmanship

The prosperity of Florence is based on commerce. Try to forge connections with local merchants and hopefully watch the money roll.



FIG.07

Political acumen

With so much political intrigue in the air, swot up on your Machiavelli. Better still, befriend the man himself!



FIG.06

Military training

After Lorenzo's botched assassination, Pope Sixtus IV will declare war on Florence. France is also interested in the city's wealth, so practice your swordsmanship.

Empire of the Sun King

Written by Catherine Curzon

Louis XIV brought the Bourbon monarchy back from the brink, seizing power back from greedy nobility to become the longest-reigning French king

L'État, c'est moi." When Louis XIV, the Sun King, supposedly uttered these words, there were precious few in France, let alone at his Versailles court, who didn't believe it. Whether he truly said it or not, the legend that Louis told his nobles "I am the state" perfectly sums up the remarkable reign of this legendary ruler.

Over the course of his 72 years on the throne, Louis became the epitome of the absolute monarch. He changed the face of the French state and arguably laid the foundation of the violent revolution that would end the French monarchy nearly 80 years after his death.

Born in 1638, Louis took the throne when he was just four years old. But until he reached the age of majority, his mother, Anne of Austria, served as queen regent, with the powerful Cardinal Jules Mazarin as her chief minister. Even after Louis turned 13 in 1651 and was able to rule on his own, Mazarin clung onto power, steering the state for the young and inexperienced sovereign until the cardinal's death in 1661. But once Louis was unleashed, his reign was a tour de force.

Until Mazarin's death, France had been a country that was still run according to feudal laws. The nobility had long enjoyed privileges that set them

above their countrymen, like the right to hunt and fill government roles and ranks that were forbidden to the public. While peasants were expected to pay a land tax, nobles were not. In fact, the

upper classes could even force additional taxes on the peasants who lived on their land, as well as place charges on the use of industrial buildings and equipment. As the seemingly untouchable nobility grew richer and more powerful, the downtrodden citizens yearned for change. So did the king.

The seeds of Louis' distrust of the elite were sown during the Fronde, a series of civil wars between 1648 and 1653. It began as a reaction against the policies of Cardinal de Richelieu and Louis' father, Louis XIII, who reigned from 1624 to 1642. These policies reduced aristocratic powers and placed them in the hands of the government instead.

After Louis XIII's death, the French nobility revolted against power passing to the Spanish queen regent (Anne was only Austrian in name) and the Italian Mazarin. Though the French-born Louis XIV was still on the throne, the aristocracy said that the regency equated to the imposition of foreign rule.

The Parlement of Paris, a judicial body run by – you guessed it – the nobles, refused to implement the government's policies. The Parlement called for a constitutional limit on the power of the crown, returning control of taxation and other matters to the upper classes.

This initial revolt erupted into war in 1649 with royal forces pitched against the Frondeurs, those who believed they fought for the old order of feudal France. Queen Anne was forced to flee Paris and seek the assistance of another Louis – the duc d'Enghien. His support swung the balance in favour of the monarchy, but not for long. He expected to be rewarded with a high office. When this didn't happen, he too declared war on the crown.

By this point, Louis had come of age and, when Enghien's bid failed and he fled France, it was the young king who rode triumphant into Paris.

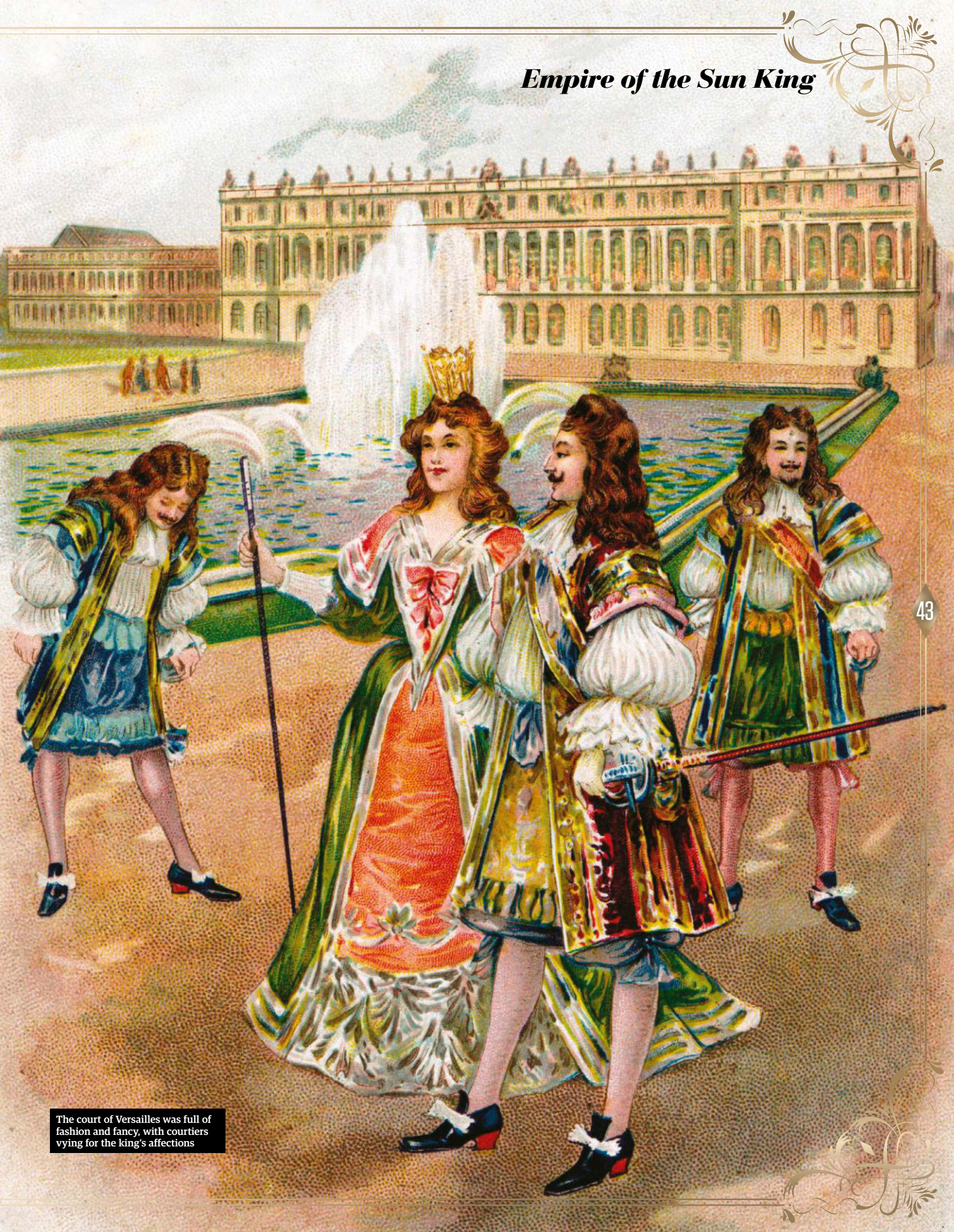
Coming to power during the Fronde, Louis had witnessed the plots and counterplots of aristocrats desperate for power and, though the monarchy eventually

prevailed, they had been on the cusp of losing it all. He carried these memories with him to the throne, always distrustful of those who had once turned against his family.

His first move on the death of Mazarin was to declare that the chief minister would not be replaced. Instead, the king would rule alone, taking guidance from his ministers and secretaries of state. They were expressly forbidden from making any decision or signing off on any matter without his personal involvement and permission.



Empire of the Sun King



The court of Versailles was full of fashion and fancy, with courtiers vying for the king's affections

Empire of the Sun King

Louis then enacted a programme of reform that initially appeared to give the disenfranchised people who lived on those feudal lands the changes they sought. Heavily taxed and exploited, they hoped that reforms would lessen their burden, but that particular change took decades. Instead, Louis XIV was remoulding the French monarchy as the very model of absolutism.

The sun rises

Louis inherited an administration that was teetering dangerously on the brink of bankruptcy. Presiding over this disastrous bank balance was Nicolas

Fouquet, the seemingly all-powerful superintendent of finances. Ambitious, arrogant and immensely wealthy, he enjoyed huge popularity among the nobility. When Mazarin died, Fouquet expected to take his old colleague's place beside the king, but he had not reckoned on Louis' own ambition. The monarch had a point to make and Fouquet would be the new regime's first casualty.

In a country facing financial ruin, Fouquet lived a life of unrestrained extravagance with close ties to the wealthy tax-farmers who were responsible for collecting duty across France. For this reason, Louis had to handle him with care. But the king knew that if he could bring down Fouquet, it would send a message to the rest of the aristocracy.

Fouquet was arrested and subjected to a sham trial that was intended to appease Louis. Though the unfair treatment he received eventually outraged French society, the message was clear: nobody was above the king, no matter what their office. For the French nobility, the old order was about to be swept away.

Louis replaced Fouquet with Jean-Baptiste Colbert, a trusted advisor upon whom he could rely. Under the king's direction, the unpopular land tax was overhauled. Collectors had to keep records for the first time and the practice of selling the rights to tax collection via private deals was ended in favour of a new public auction system. The results were phenomenally successful, with treasury

Grand Designs

Louis XIV's Palace of Versailles was a testament to his own power, both in its opulent grandeur and its position outside Paris, forcing the nobility to come to him

The council chamber

Louis ruled absolutely and his ministers were not allowed to make any decisions. Instead, they gathered each day in the council chamber to listen to the king's musings.

The king's chambers

Each evening, Louis dined grandly before his courtiers, who were not allowed to eat in his presence without permission. As their stomachs growled, he gorged and feasted.

The Hall of Mirrors

Louis proceeded through the Hall of Mirrors every day, and it stood as a glittering symbol of his wealth and power.

The Apollo Salon

The Apollo Salon was Louis' throne room. It once housed a magnificent throne, but that was melted down in 1689 and added to the country's war chest.

The bedchamber

Courtiers jostled for the sought-after invite to Louis' private apartments. To hold the candle as he prepared for bed was a highly prized honour.

The chapel royal

The chapel was the place where Louis communed with God. As an absolute monarch chosen by the Lord, he put a great emphasis on devotion to him and the Almighty.



receipts increasing by over 4 million livres (almost £70 million today) in just a decade.

Tax reform was always a problem in France, where few beyond peasants actually paid anything to the state. Under ancient law, the king could only raise levies if he exempted the upper classes, and plenty of wealthy non-nobles found ways around the system by paying off the aristocracy. Louis stopped short of overturning this scheme and didn't impose taxes on the nobles until very late in his reign, but he certainly did plenty other things to bring them under control.

With the state coffers under control, the king turned to the military. The old rule that reserved senior ranks for the aristocracy was swept

aside and rank was now to be attained through ability, as opposed to birthright. No longer would commanders be able to draw out conflict for their own ends, and they too would be expected to answer to the sovereign and his appointees.

Power at Versailles

Vital to Louis' reign was the decision to bring the government to Versailles. The Fronde had shown him the plots that nobles could dream up when they were away from court, yet no Parisian residence could accommodate them all. So at enormous public expense he created one that could, turning what had been a relatively simple hunting lodge into the

magnificent palace we know today, and the beating heart of French administration.

Any aristocrat desiring office or advancement had to make their home at Versailles, and the king required proof of birthright from all who did. This included papers that traced lineage for the past 100 years, and it all had to be verified by religious and government officials.

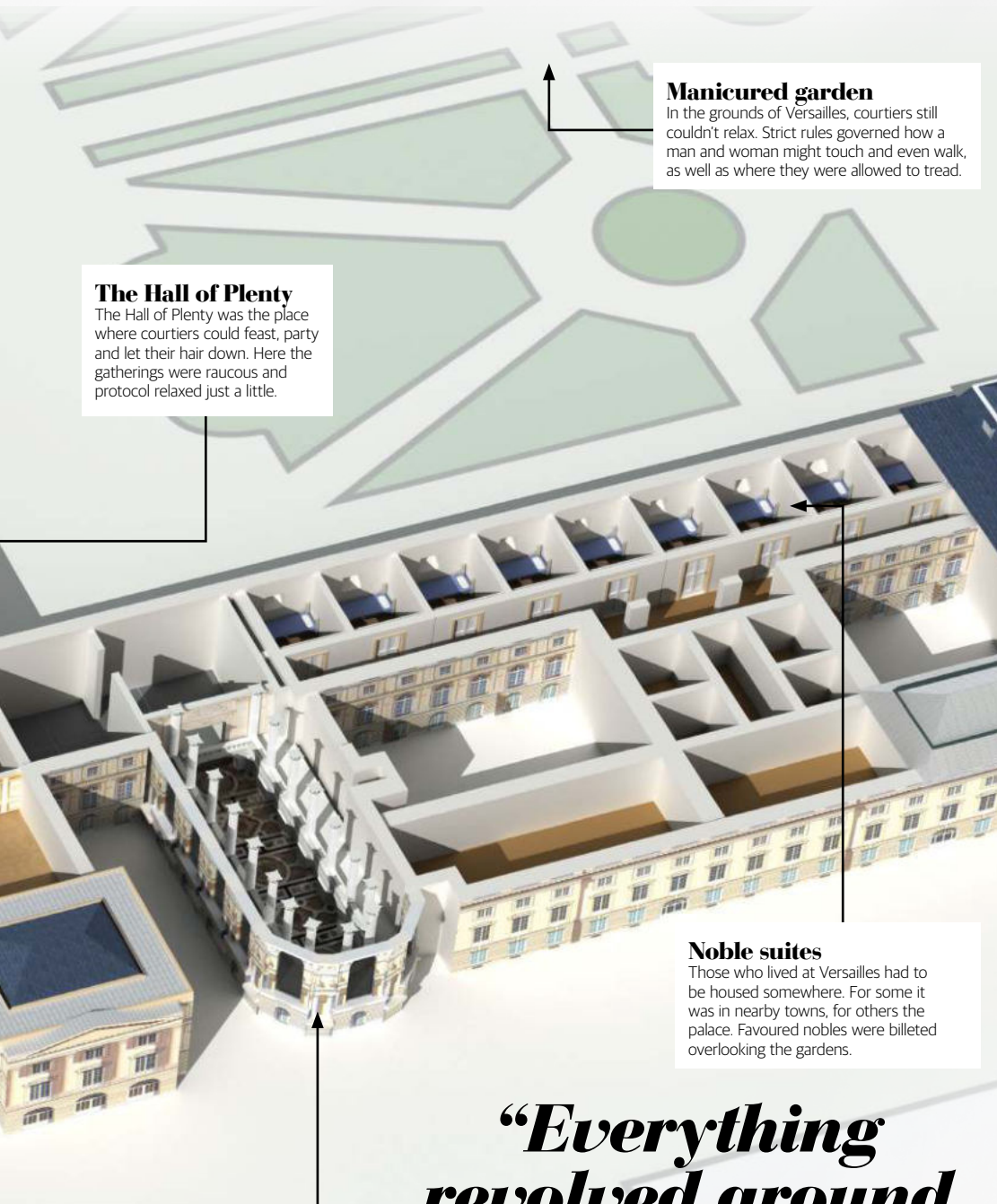
So-called 'false nobles' were subject to huge taxes and any genuine ones who balked at relocating to Versailles were effectively frozen out of their own class. They were denied office or subsidies and swiftly fell into debt, while losing any influence they might once have held.

By congregating all those ambitious nobles right under his very nose, Louis had played a masterstroke. Scheming was next to impossible, for the king seemed to know everything, and the age of the all-powerful aristocrat ruling over his far-flung corner of France had come to an end.

Those who did come to Versailles faced crippling expenditure just to keep up with Louis. It was the most fabulous and fashionable court in Europe and to fit in was no mean feat. Debt was a fact of life to most courtiers but worth it to associate with the king. Only Louis was empowered to grant loans to the courtiers, and with the nobles indebted to him there was even less chance of revolt, for no one dared to fall on the wrong side of him lest he call in their debts for immediate payment.

Best of all, an exhausting focus on fashion and peacocking kept those courtiers preoccupied, hoodwinking them into scheming to outdo each other on the catwalk rather than their monarch in matters of business. This was by design rather than by accident on the part of Louis, who preferred to see his followers plotting to be the most fashionable and well connected instead of making the sort of trouble that led to civil wars.

Baffling rules of etiquette were established, determining who could sit in which chair, in what order one was to dress, where one was allowed to go and so on. Everything revolved around the king, and if one wanted to flourish, one had to pay proper respect to him by observing the strict rules that had been established to ensure loyalty.



The Hall of Plenty

The Hall of Plenty was the place where courtiers could feast, party and let their hair down. Here the gatherings were raucous and protocol relaxed just a little.

Manicured garden

In the grounds of Versailles, courtiers still couldn't relax. Strict rules governed how a man and woman might touch and even walk, as well as where they were allowed to tread.

Noble suites

Those who lived at Versailles had to be housed somewhere. For some it was in nearby towns, for others the palace. Favoured nobles were billeted overlooking the gardens.

***“Everything
revolved around
the king”***

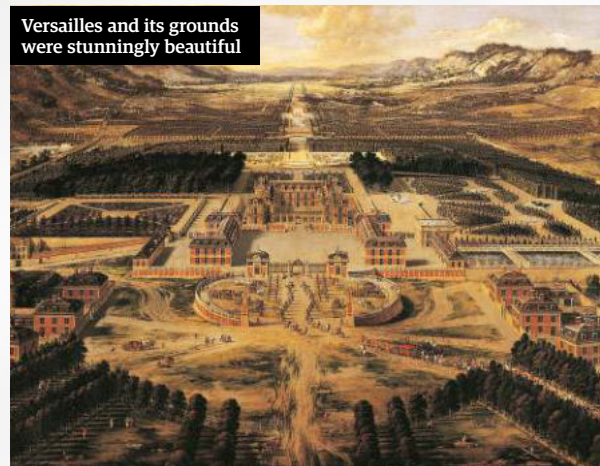
Just a child in this painting, the king is already depicted as the conquering Jupiter





Louis XIV and his family are depicted as Roman gods, the essence of absolutism

Versailles and its grounds were stunningly beautiful



The opulent Hall of Mirrors at Versailles captures the splendour of the Bourbon court



46

For instance, nobody other than a monarch and their consort could sit in an armchair, and other royals were allowed a chair with back support. Dukes and duchesses sat on stools, but everyone else had to stand until given permission to sit.

Should a courtier be in the corridors when the king's elaborate feasts were being taken to him, they had to curtsy or bow to the passing food and remain that way until the entire feast had passed from sight. Even bodily functions were regulated and it was considered social death to yawn in Louis' presence or even a well-connected noble who might report your faux pas to the king.

Should one be snubbed by the monarch, one could consider one's career at court over. Yet there were incentives beyond connections for those willing to give up their lives to be at Versailles, like tax breaks and protection from creditors.

Though only required to be at the palace for six months a year, many nobles so feared falling out of the loop that they did all they could to be there for as long as possible, neglecting their own estates. Soon the Versailles court divided into factions, with each playing off against the others for the monarch's affections. In a world where idleness had become an art form, infighting was the chief entertainment for those with nothing better to do than vie for the favour of their king.

Kept at Versailles and away from their estates for years at a time, the ancient power of the clientèle system fell away. This allowed the noble classes to band together, favouring one another and

networking via an intricate system of patronage and apprenticeships.

The doors to privilege were closed to those lacking existing connections to win favour, and lesser families had to pay tribute to greater houses to progress. In the new system at Versailles, all had to bow to Louis, regardless of who they might be. Through his elaborate and carefully manipulated worlds of factions and offices, he alone controlled patronage.

The gathering storm

Louis is known to history as the Sun King, a stellar sovereign around whom the country and court orbited. For the majority of his 72-year rule he sat at the very pinnacle of an absolutist monarchy. Access to him was along strictly hierarchical lines, and this world dominated by fashion and factions was one that few in France might ever have predicted, but it was successful.

Louis believed in his own divine right, that he was chosen by God, and his successors followed the same doctrine. Just like the Sun King, they spent money like it was going out of style and as decades passed, the citizens grew hungrier and poorer while the nobility became wealthier.

Under Louis XIV, France became one of the world's superpowers, with an army to be reckoned with and a cultural identity revolving around the tastes of its leader. But all of this came at a price. Public discontent began early, when the expected

easing of taxes on the poor didn't happen. Louis also pursued an aggressive expansionist policy and France was frequently at war. The cost for the conflicts was met by increased taxation on those who could least afford it.

The final war of his reign was the War of the Spanish Succession, which raged from 1701 to 1714. The crippling cost drove France again to the brink of bankruptcy and famine seized the country. Louis had been determined to secure the succession of his grandson to the Spanish throne, but to the poor French it looked as though he had chosen family ambition over the good of his subjects. It was the final action of the king's life and he died in 1715, having secured Philip's Spanish claim.

With each king, the royal debt grew larger until, by the time of the ill-fated Louis XVI, the state was virtually bankrupt again. With the coffers depleted by war as much as lavish spending, it would take a strong and decisive monarch to get things back on track. Louis XVI was neither.

Louis the Last, as he was known, was an indecisive and timid ruler, desperate to be liked and with a hatred of confrontation that meant

24 hours at Versailles Louis loved routine: how better to keep a court in its place?

Official waking

Though he was often up early to hunt, Louis XIV was always tucked up in his state bed by 8.00am. Here he was awakened by his premier valet de la chambre du roi, who opened the bed curtain. Louis' childhood nurse pressed her daily kiss to his brow and the royal physician and chief surgeon collected the chamberpot for examination.

The grand entrée

With the king resplendent in his first wig of the day and nightshirt, an audience of favoured male courtiers filed in to watch the grand chamberlain lay out his clothes and made an offering of holy water. The master of the bedchamber and first servant removed the nightshirt and courtiers presented Louis with a petition of their choice before he tucked into a bowl of soup.

The première entrée

With prayers said, lesser courtiers gathered to watch the king dress and shave. According to their rank, courtiers were admitted at set moments in the ceremony. However, by the time he was ready to don his shoes and stockings, the entire male court was present to witness this daily routine. There was even a lord of the neckcloths, charged with ensuring the monarch was just so.

Grand lever

The king left his state apartments and, followed by his courtiers, walked through the Hall of Mirrors and into the royal chapel to observe Mass, at which a new piece of music was performed each day. Once again, the more important courtiers could use this procession as an opportunity to approach the monarch, at his discretion.

The king's council

Louis held several councils each week, dependent on the day in question. As an absolute monarch, routine was vital to ensure that he was able to manage his workload. Though he was always joined by his ministers, they were there in a strictly advisory capacity. Louis listened intently to their advice before making any decisions.

8.00am

8.15am

8.30am

10.00am

11.00am

his ministers and advisers found him easy to manipulate. The royal household was seen as profligate and wasteful, revelling in fashionable excess while the people of France starved.

A cloud of dissent hovered over the entire country in the 1780s, and when the hungry, poor masses looked to the splendour of Versailles, what they saw made their blood boil. This was a world of opulence and luxury beyond their imagining and presiding over it was a king who could not possibly know what life was like for a French citizen. His wife was dripping in jewels and clad in the latest fashions, his household filled with luxuries paid for by the taxes that he had levied on people who couldn't even afford food.

Louis XIV had presided over every decision made during his reign and Louis XV had attempted to do the same, not always successfully. Louis XVI, however, was happy to be led by his ministers, and by the time he realised the way the wind was blowing it was too late to turn back.

Louis XVI had seized the reins of power and held them tight but he was too caught up in petty squabbles and his efforts to appease his courtiers and nobles. Too late he tried to claw his way back to the image of divine right that his predecessors had established, but this was not the decisive, unsentimental Sun King. This was the wrong man in the wrong place at the worst time.

Louis XIV's Versailles had been the centre of French rule. Under Louis XVI it became the centre of French confusion. Less than 100 years after the Sun King, the guillotine fell on the neck of his great-great-grandson, ending the reign of the Bourbon dynasty.



Louis XIV dressed as Apollo at the Bacchus Ball in 1651. Apollo was associated with the sun, and Louis decided to use it as his emblem

The mistresses of Versailles

For the women of Versailles, pillow talk was part of politics

Henrietta of England

Duchess of Orléans

Known as Minette, Henrietta was Louis' cousin as well as the wife of his brother, Philippe de France. As daughter of Charles I, she had immaculate pedigree and was very generous with her favours, often sharing male lovers with her husband. As Louis' mistress, she played a vital role in diplomatic business between France and England.



Louise de La Vallière

Duchess of La Vallière

Louise was employed as a decoy to allow Louis to intrigue with Minette, but the king and the 17 year old unexpectedly fell in love. Despite giving birth to five children with her lover, Louise was caught up in the scheming of court factions and pushed aside by the ambitious Madame de Montespan – but not before given a duchy.



Françoise-Athénaïs

Marquise de Montespan

Madame de Montespan is perhaps the most famous mistress of the king. She was his lover for two decades and was known by some as the real queen of France. Athénaïs was implicated in the Affaire des Poisons. Suspected of enchanting the king with witchcraft, she retired to a convent.



Catherine de Gramont

Princess of Monaco

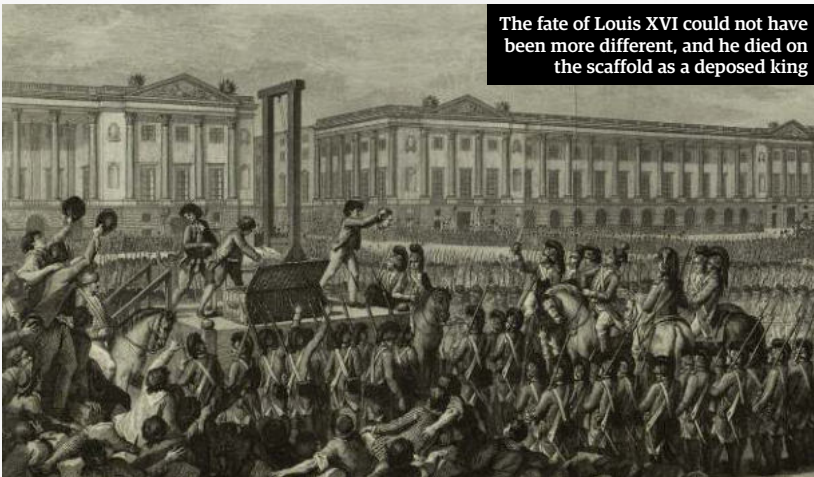
Catherine was the sister of the comte de Guiche, lover of both Henrietta and her husband. Known as 'the Torrent' for her rapacious sexual appetite, Catherine took many lovers among the nobility. She even enjoyed a liaison with Henrietta when Henrietta was scheming to discredit her and win back Louis' favour!



Françoise d'Aubigné

Marquise de Maintenon

Initially governess to the illegitimate children of Louis and Madame de Montespan, Françoise eventually supplanted her as his lover. Historians believe that she and the widowed king were married in the early 1780s, though their union was never made public and she was not acknowledged as queen.



The fate of Louis XVI could not have been more different, and he died on the scaffold as a deposed king

Lunch

The gentlemen of the court returned to the king's chambers to watch him eat lunch. In theory this was a meal he would enjoy alone, but he preferred to issue invitations to those who had watched him at the grand entrée. Courtiers couldn't knock on the door to gain entrance, however, and had to scratch on it with their little fingernail to gain his attention.

An afternoon walk

With business concluded, Louis rode or walked in the grounds of Versailles with the court ladies. Hand-holding was forbidden, and women instead rested their palm atop their companion's bent arm. Although no official business was conducted during walks, a shrewd lady might make mention of her favourite causes as they strolled.

Evening entertainment

When his son was old enough to play host, Louis increasingly avoided evening gatherings, but when he did attend, it was a more casual affair than others. Courtiers freely mingled and played cards or billiards, or sometimes enjoyed concerts. The emphasis at these evening events was very definitely on fun rather than pomp.

The grand-couvert

In front of an audience comprising his courtiers, the king repaired to his antechamber to eat at the royal table alongside members of the royal family. With Louis seated at a table facing a group of musicians, he consumed a monumental meal of more than 20 dishes, enjoying just a little of each.

Le coucher

In an exact reversal of his morning ceremonies, Louis' coucher saw him prepare for bed before an audience of nobles, with one exceptionally privileged courtier chosen to hold a candlestick for the ceremony. With the king safely in bed, the courtiers left and the Sun King settled for the night, until it all began again the following day.

1.00pm

2.00pm

7.00pm

10.00pm

11.00pm

Through History

BOATS AND SHIPS

From the ark to the Ark Royal, humans have been designing vessels for thousands of years – and some have changed the course of history

DUGOUT CANOE c.8200-7600 BCE

Dugouts are considered to be the oldest type of boat and date far back into prehistory. They were used for transportation on rivers and lakes and there is speculation that they facilitated the first human settlement of Australia around 40,000 years ago. The most basic types are made from hollowed-out logs such as the Pesse Canoe, which was found in the Netherlands in 1955 during the construction of a road. It is the world's oldest recovered boat and is now on display in the Drents Museum, Assen.

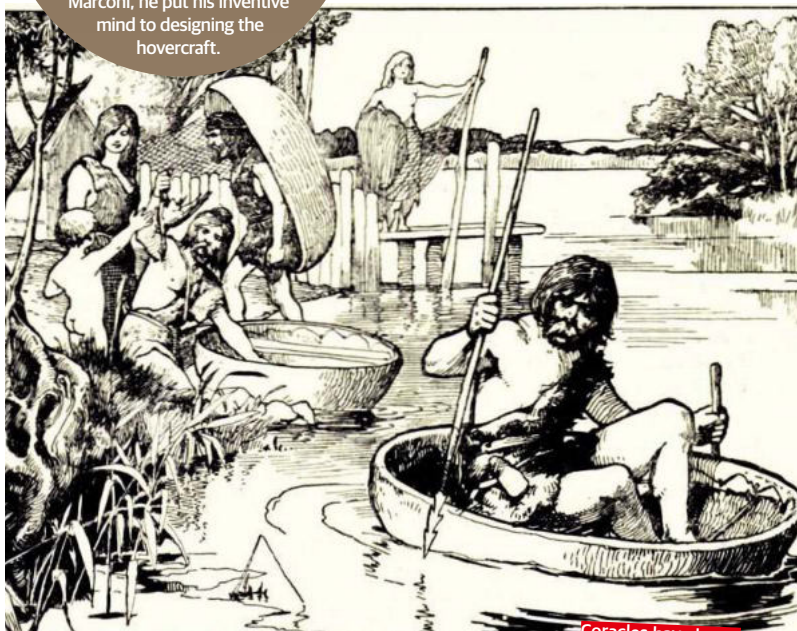


This canoe was made from a pine log, hollowed out with an axe

Sir Christopher Cockerell

1910-1999, BRITISH

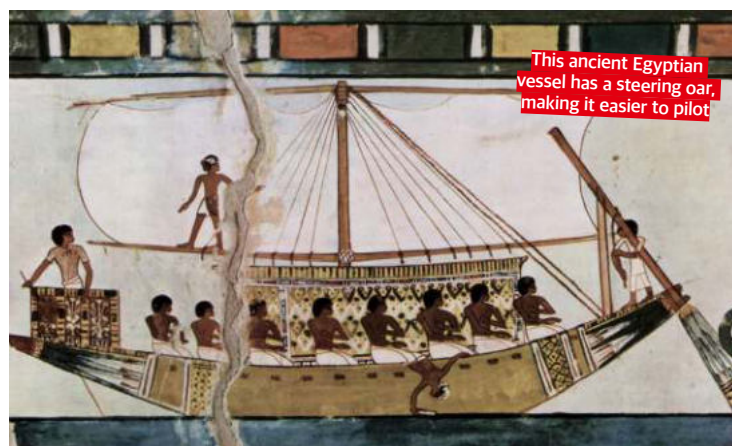
Born in Cambridge, this distinguished engineer helped to invent radar and pioneered a secret navigation system that allowed many Royal Air Force pilots to return home safely in World War II. After leaving his employer, Marconi, he put his inventive mind to designing the hovercraft.



Coracles have been used in Britain for hundreds of years

CORACLE c.2500 BCE

There are depictions of coracles in cave paintings dating back to the Bronze Age and these simple craft, which can still be seen today in parts of Wales, were observed by Julius Caesar when he invaded Britain. Shaped like upturned bowls with flat bottoms, they're paddled on fast-flowing rivers and are used by fishermen as they hardly disturb the water. They generally have a wooden frame and a waterproof covering, traditionally made of animal hide but now often canvas covered with tar, and they are extremely light so can easily be carried by one person.



This ancient Egyptian vessel has a steering oar, making it easier to pilot

SAILING BOAT c.5500 BCE

Sails have been used to propel boats and ships for thousands of years – the earliest known depiction of a sailing boat comes from Mesopotamia (modern Kuwait) circa 5500 BCE. The Ancient Egyptians used simple square sails on their watercraft. They would hoist the sail to travel down the Nile using the prevailing north-south winds, then row back on the current. Sails were also adopted by Greek and Phoenician traders and the invention of the lateen (triangular) sail around the 1st century BCE, which allowed a craft to tack against the wind, paved the way for the age of maritime discovery.



VIKING LONGSHIP

c.1ST CENTURY BCE

The iconic Viking longship or 'dragon-ship' was the first vessel to have a keel, a structural beam running the length of the ship beneath the hull that made them faster and more stable. They also had a small 'draft' (the vertical distance between the waterline and the ship's bottom) so they could travel through shallow water and were double-ended so they could reverse quickly without the need to turn. These factors combined to make them ideal warships.

Longships were designed for fast-paced raiding, but the Vikings also had slower cargo ships called knarrs

PADDLE BOAT C. 4TH-5TH CENTURY CE

The Romans appear to have been the first to attach paddle wheels to their boats in order to propel them through the water; the wheels were attached to the outside of the craft and turned by yoked oxen in the hull. In China, paddle-wheeled vessels appeared around the same time, the paddles being powered by foot treadles, and they were deployed as warships for centuries. In the early 19th century, steam-powered paddle boats began to be used on coastal trips and then on transatlantic journeys.



Cornelius Jacobszoon Drebbel

1572-1633, DUTCH

Drebbel came to Britain in 1604 after news of his inventions reached James I and he demonstrated his submarine to the king on the Thames. It could reach a depth of 4.5 metres and remain submerged for up to three hours. He went on to make secret weapons for Charles I.

CARRACK SHIP 15TH CENTURY

It was the carrack ship that made the Age of Discovery possible. These mighty vessels had three or four masts, with square sails on the fore and main masts, and a lateen sail on the mizzenmast. They also had extremely large holds so that they could carry provisions and mercantile goods and were stable in rough seas. These factors made them ideally suited for lengthy voyages and facilitated European colonial expansion. The first circumnavigation of the world was accomplished in a carrack ship called Victoria.

Lionel Lukin

1742-1834, BRITISH

Lukin was a London coachbuilder, but he paved the way for the first lifeboat by designing an unsinkable boat. He experimented with a Norwegian yawl to which he added watertight compartments, buoyant materials such as cork, and a false iron keel to keep it upright. He patented the design in 1785.

LIFEBOAT 1790

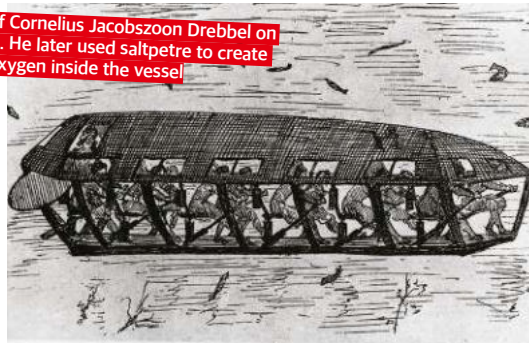
After a tragedy on the River Tyne in which a ship's crew drowned in a storm, a competition was launched to design a lifeboat. The prize was awarded to two local men, William Wouldhave, who designed a self-righting vessel made of copper and cork, and Henry Greathead, a boat builder who suggested a wooden vessel. The committee amalgamated their ideas to produce a final design, which Greathead then modified to create the world's first purpose-built lifeboat. Greathead never took out a patent on his invention so that anyone could use it.



SUBMARINE 1620

Although there had been attempts to build submersible vessels since antiquity, the first successful submarine was designed by Dutchman Cornelius Jacobszoon Drebbel, who was in the service of James I. It was powered by oars and probably had floats attached to breathing tubes ensuring that the rowers had oxygen. The boat (submarines are always boats, never ships) was tested on the River Thames. Submarines continued to be propelled by human power until the 1860s.

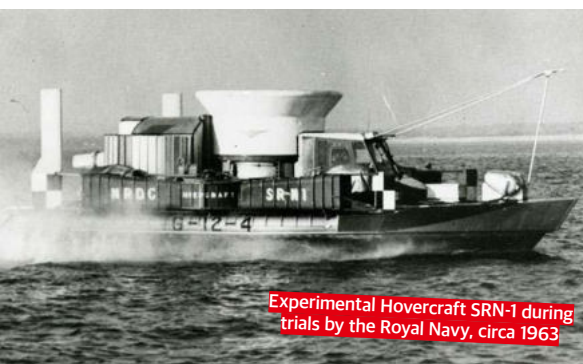
Submarine of Cornelius Jacobszoon Drebbel on the Thames. He later used saltpetre to create oxygen inside the vessel



HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH AIRCRAFT CARRIER 2014

HMS Queen Elizabeth is the largest warship ever built for the United Kingdom's Royal Navy. This 280-metre long vessel has four dining areas, a cinema, fitness areas and an operating theatre, while its crew can number up to 1,600. The 65,000-tonne aircraft carrier can also support 36 fighter jets and four helicopters. Ships have been used for airborne operations since 1806, when the Royal Navy deployed kites from HMS Pallas to spread anti-Napoleon propaganda leaflets over France. In 1914, HMS Ark Royal was converted from a merchant vessel to become the first modern aircraft carrier.

© Getty



HOVERCRAFT 1954

The first attempt to create an air-cushioned craft was in the late 19th century and various experimental vessels were designed prior to World War II. However, it was not until 1954 that a patent was issued for the first recognisably modern hovercraft – the designer being British mechanical engineer Sir Christopher Cockerell. Annular jets of air formed a cushion that reduced friction and allowed the craft to travel faster. A working model was finally built in 1958 and this amphibious vessel made its first test by crossing the Channel the following year.





Sir Robert Peel

This gifted politician founded modern policing, pushed Catholic emancipation and heralded an era of free trade, but he still incurred the wrath of his own party

Written by David Crookes

Towards the end of the night on 25 June 1846, eyes were blurring and minds were tiring, but a crucial parliamentary vote had been cast. The Lords had brought closure to what had been a lengthy campaign against the controversial Corn Laws, backing a previous decision in the Commons to repeal them.

Tory prime minister Sir Robert Peel was elated, but many in his own party were not. For them, the country's leader had become a true villain – but scores of his countrymen held him aloft as a hero of the people. It was easy to see why.

The Corn Laws had been introduced by the Tory Party in 1815 to protect British agriculture. By only allowing corn imports when the price in the UK reached a high of 80 shillings a quarter, they had kept the cost of bread artificially high. While landowners loved this, the public and industrialists were widely opposed.

Nothing in Peel's upbringing hinted that he may one day act on behalf of the many rather than the few. Born in Bury, Lancashire, in 1788 to a rich cotton mill owner and educated at Harrow

and Oxford, he was hugely privileged. In 1809, at the age of 21, Peel used his connections to enter the House of Commons. A well-placed cash investment and a word in the ear of the chief secretary of Ireland was all that was needed to parachute Peel into a parliamentary seat in Cashel, County Tipperary, where the 24 electors got him in unopposed on the Tory Party ticket.

Peel developed a real taste for politics and proved to be a promising backbencher. This meant there was no problem in offering him a role as one of the two undersecretaries for war and colonies when his father pulled some more strings a year later.

Showing great ambition and a knack for rhetoric, he became well known in the Commons. He may have been mockingly nicknamed 'Spinning Jenny' because of his industrial background, but what he lacked in charisma and flamboyance, he more than made up for in determination and ambition. Whether or not that yielded positive results really depended on which side of the fence people sat.

It proved hard to second guess Peel, who was a U-turner of the highest order. He had actually

Defining moment

Facts and near-famine

The Irish potato crop fails during Peel's time as chief secretary of Ireland and there is a near-famine in 1817. The government suggests banning potato exports from Ireland to keep the much-needed food in the country and Peel is persuaded to make the case without figures. It turns out that exports were negligible, rendering the action pointless. Embarrassed, Peel subsequently insists that he only acted on facts.

1817

A full-length portrait of Sir Robert Peel, a middle-aged man with wavy brown hair, wearing a dark coat over a light-colored waistcoat and a white cravat. He is seated, leaning forward with his hands resting on his knees. The background is dark and textured.

Hero or Villain?

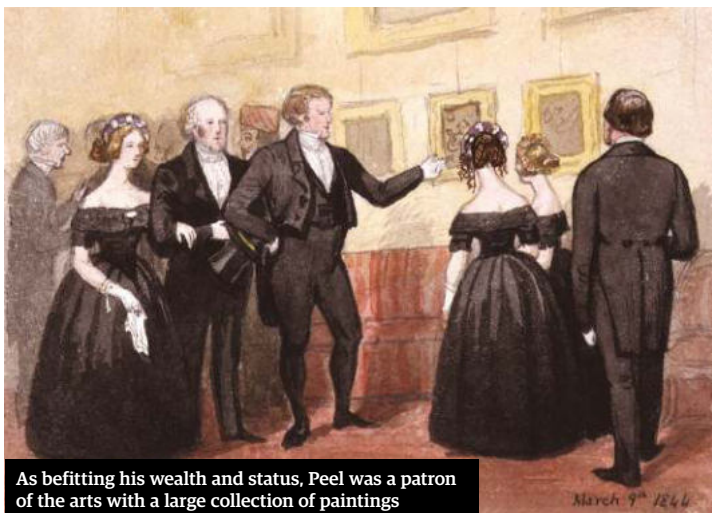
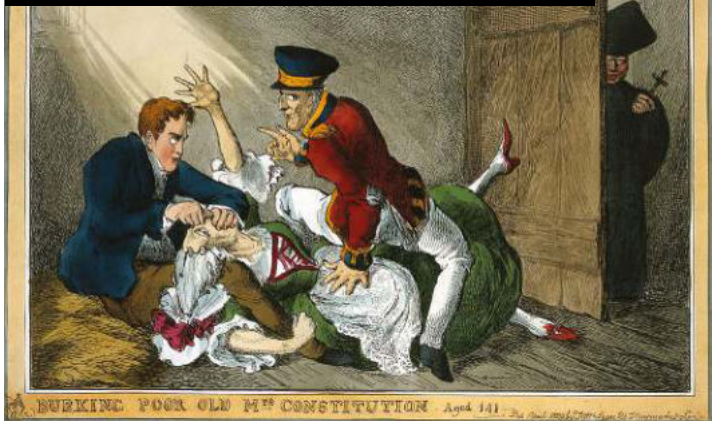
SIR ROBERT PEEL

"A well-placed investment
and a word in the ear of
the chief secretary of
Ireland was all that was
needed to secure Peel a
parliamentary seat"

Hero or Villain?

SIR ROBERT PEELE

This sketch of murderers William Burke and William Hare killing a woman to sell her corpse for dissection was drawn to satirise Wellington and Peel's opposition to Catholic emancipation



opposed the repeal of the Corn Laws for much of his political career, only to change his mind around 1844. What's more, when he had become chief secretary of Ireland in 1812, he strongly opposed Catholic emancipation, a stance that earned him the nickname 'Orange Peel' – the Protestant Irish having been known as 'orange' since 1690.

Fast-forward to 1828 and Peel was agreeing to oversee the passage of the Catholic Relief Act of 1829, allowing non-Anglicans the right to hold public office. For that move, Peel was dubbed a traitor by his own party and he was angrily turfed out of the Oxford University seat he'd held since 1817.

Something he did stick to, though, was his idea of a non-military police service. While he was in Dublin, he worked hard on a proposal for a provisional force that could be deployed in the counties with the worst disorder. The Peace Preservation Act passed

through Parliament in 1814 and it paved the way for the Royal Irish Constabulary.

Peel was so encouraged by its success that he sought to replicate it in London when he became home secretary in 1822. He achieved this in 1829, establishing the Metropolitan Police Force. Supervised by two magistrates and financed by a police rate, the constables became known as 'bobbies' and 'peelers' in Peel's honour.

During this period, Peel also informed the prime minister that he wanted to reform criminal law. He had a desire for people to clearly understand the consequences of committing an offence and he believed the current system was too blurred. He argued that the death penalty should

be removed for some offences and he reformed prisons through the Gaol Act of 1823 by employing surgeons and chaplains in jails, paying gaolers, educating inmates and forbidding alcohol. All of

this was needed at a time of widespread discontent and violent action, especially in the industrialised cities of the north. The country was changing fast.

This was certainly obvious in 1830. The Tory government had fallen and Peel – now Member of Parliament (MP) for Tamworth – found himself in opposition to a new administration headed by Whig prime minister Earl Grey. Grey wanted to overhaul Parliament but Peel spoke firmly against it. In doing so, he was opposing the Great Reform Bill's plan to rid the UK of so-called 'rotten boroughs', constituencies that were able to elect an MP despite having very few voters. Something Peel had very much benefitted from.

At the same time, the bill wanted to hand representation to northern cities like Manchester that had no MPs despite their huge size. When it passed in 1832, the electorate increased from 500,000 to 813,000 and those industrialised areas gained at the rightful expense of those dominated by wealthy patrons. It led to a period of national prosperity – and also to another Peel U-turn.

After Peel became prime minister in 1834, he issued the Tamworth Manifesto. It laid down the principles of the modern Conservative Party, yet it also accepted the Reform Act. Little wonder Lord John Russell would later go on to say Peel was a

Defining moment

Death of his father

Peel was close to his father, who had worked so hard to ensure Peel's early political life was a success. So when his father dies peacefully in his armchair at the age of 80, it comes as a huge blow. Peel is left all of his father's lands and four times the assets left to his other sons. He decides to demolish Drayton Manor and replaces it with a grand mansion incorporating a three-storey tower.

3 May 1830

Defining moment

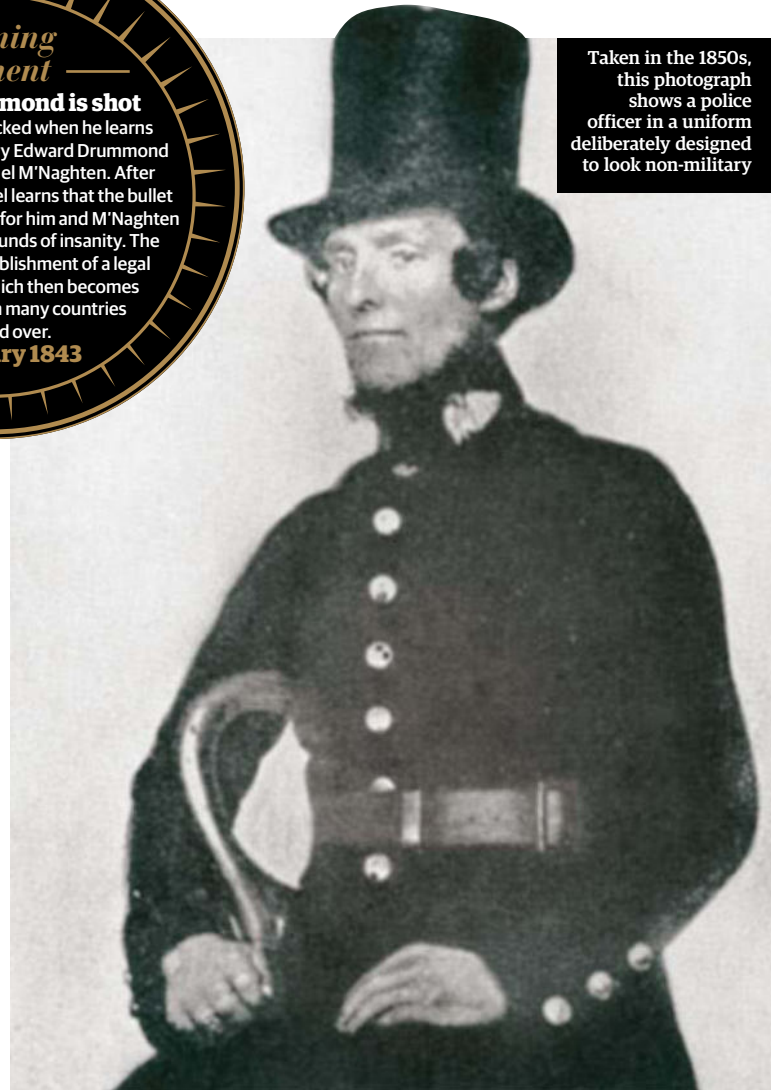
Edward Drummond is shot

Sir Robert Peel is shocked when he learns that his private secretary Edward Drummond had been shot by Daniel M'Naghten. After Drummond's death, Peel learns that the bullet may have been intended for him and M'Naghten is acquitted on the grounds of insanity. The case leads to the establishment of a legal test for insanity, which then becomes enshrined in law in many countries the world over.

20 January 1843



Peel split his party to reform the Corn Laws and ease Irish suffering during the Potato Famine of 1845-52



Taken in the 1850s, this photograph shows a police officer in a uniform deliberately designed to look non-military

“He reformed prisons through [...] employing surgeons and chaplains in jails, paying gaolers, educating inmates and forbidding alcohol”

“pretty hand at hauling down his colours”. His was not the only cutting opinion, though.

Peel was generally perceived to be a functional, dull politician lacking charisma – although Queen Victoria warmed to him later, she observed, “He is such a cold, odd man.” He liked to work with facts and rarely displayed humour in public.

Some of the most scathing attacks came from fellow Tory Benjamin Disraeli, who repeatedly clashed with him in the Commons over his change of heart with regards to the Corn Laws. Peel was called a “burglar of other's intellect”. “He hacked and mangled Peel with the most unsparing severity,” diarist Charles Greville wrote in 1846.

But his U-turns were not flip-flops. He didn't start with one position, change it and go back over and over. Once his mind changed, that was his stance. Curiously, he'd always gone from a position right of the political spectrum to one on the left, but his laws were, on the whole, progressive. That first term as prime minister only lasted 100 days, but when

the Tories won the 14th UK election with 367 seats against the Whigs' 271 in 1841 and Peel became prime minister for the second time, his government rolled up its sleeves and got down to work.

The Mines and Collieries Act of 1842 banned all children under ten from working underground in coal mines and the Factories Act of 1844 outlawed night working. The Corn Laws would always be the crowning glory, though, defining Peel forever in the minds of many.

He knew that the Irish Potato Famine in 1845 could not be ignored, that millions of people were starving and being forced to eat grass and roots. He had actually sought to lessen the hardship by secretly buying and shipping £100,000-worth of maize and cornmeal from America to Ireland. The bright yellow foodstuff was dubbed ‘Peel's brimstone’ but still wasn't enough. Cheap imports were needed in order to reduce the price of food and so Peel went on the offensive, ignoring his own party and eventually splitting them. He had to rely

on support from the Whigs and the Radicals, but a hard-fought victory was eventually his.

The impact was huge. An era of free trade had been ushered in and the modern Conservative Party emerged. Peel had shown great skill in knowing when to push for reform, and he had ultimately placed the national interest above that of his party and himself.

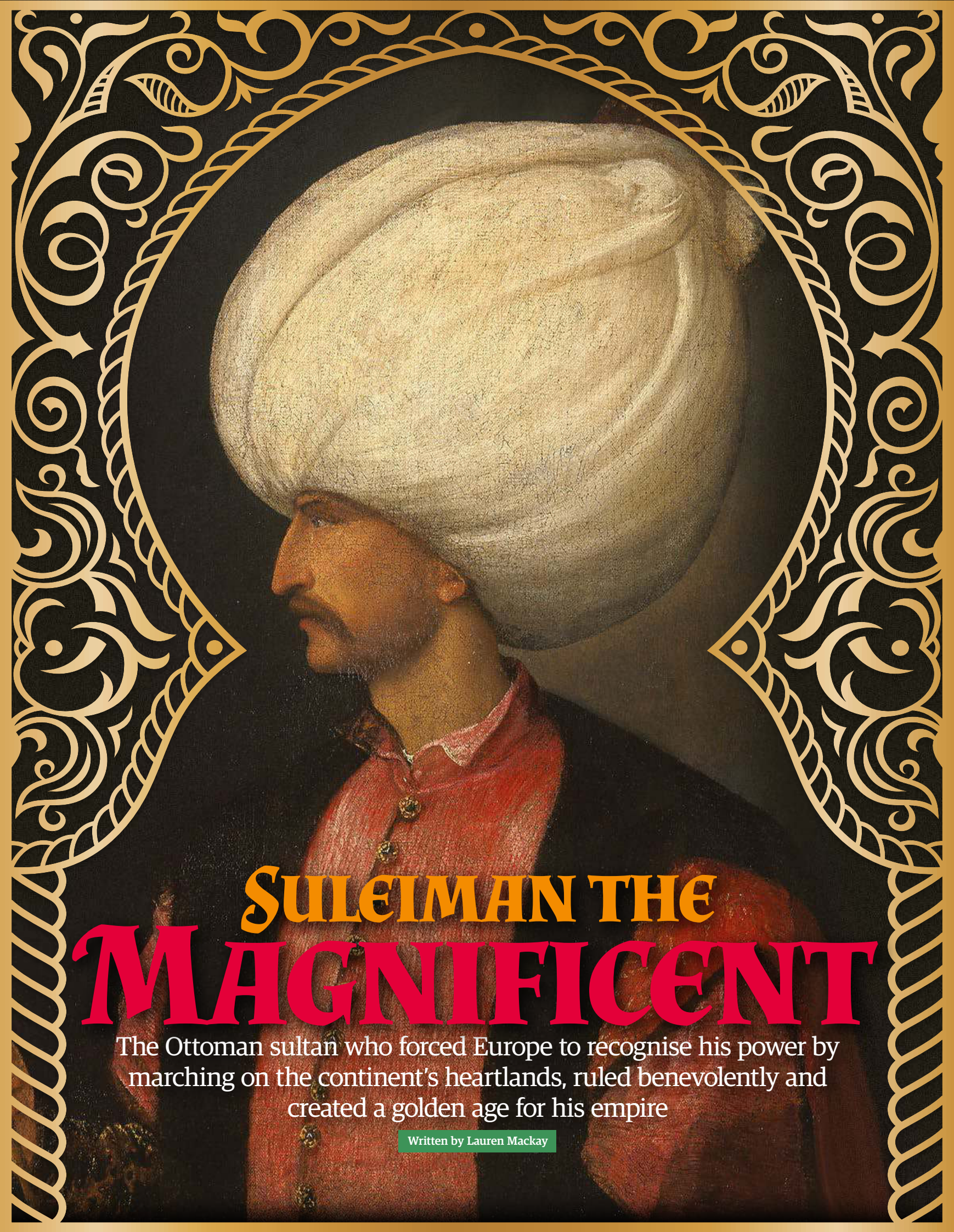
However, his backbenchers felt he had betrayed them and a huge split emerged after Peel resigned just three days later when he was defeated on another bill. Those loyal to him eventually formed the Liberal Party in 1859, but Peel didn't see this – he died after falling from his horse on 2 July 1850.

On his passing, much praise was heaped upon him. Queen Victoria said, “Everyone seems to have lost a personal friend.” The Duke of Wellington told the Lords, “I never knew a man in whose trust and justice I had a more lively confidence.” It was clear he'd made his mark, but it would be 28 years before the Conservatives would win another majority.

Was Sir Robert Peel a hero or a villain?
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SULEIMAN THE MAGNIFICENT

The Ottoman sultan who forced Europe to recognise his power by marching on the continent's heartlands, ruled benevolently and created a golden age for his empire

Written by Lauren Mackay

At the beginning of the 16th century, the balance of power in Europe was held by three dynamic young rulers: Henry VIII of England, Francis I of France and Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire. News of the accession of the 26-year-old Suleiman I to the throne of the distant Ottoman Empire in 1520 barely raised an eyebrow. But in just over a year, the sultan's name would be known throughout the Western world and in his lifetime Europeans would address him by an even grander title: Suleiman the Magnificent.

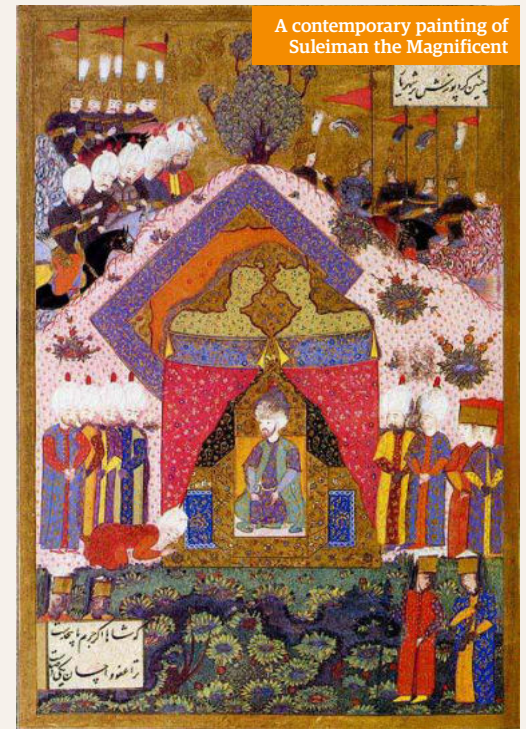
Our earliest report about Suleiman describes him as tall with a round face, wiry aquiline nose, a neck that was a little too long, and with piercing hazel eyes and broad forehead. He received a royal education from the age of seven, when he was sent to Topkapı Palace in the Ottoman capital, Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul).

Among the elegant halls lined with blue, white and turquoise mosaic tiles and surrounded by fine carpets and textiles, famous scholars tutored young Suleiman in history, science, literature, theology and military tactics. He was a gifted poet and a linguist, fluent in five languages – Turkish, Arabic, Chagatai (a Central Asian Turkic dialect), Persian and Serbian. In fact, part of the reason the Europeans were so unconcerned with Suleiman's coronation was that he was known to be scholarly, not a warmonger like his father.

Suleiman's father, Selim I (also known as Selim the Grim), reigned for only eight years, but he left his son in an unrivalled strategic position with a greatly expanded empire after conquering the Egyptian Mamluk Sultanate and the Persian Safavid dynasty. This meant as well as governing modern-day Greece, Turkey and the coast of the Black Sea, Suleiman inherited Egypt, Libya, Syria, Palestine, the Hejaz region of Saudi Arabia and the Algerian coast. Though Selim had been hostile towards Europe, it was generally assumed that his son would continue expanding further east. But the young, ambitious sultan had other ideas.

Suleiman and Charles V harboured similar ambitions, both significantly greater than their other European counterparts, which would keep the pair on a collision course for most of their reigns. While Henry VIII dreamed of reclaiming France and Francis fantasised about retaking the Duchy of Milan, Charles was fervently dedicated to uniting and expanding Christendom under his own global monarchy. This would include recapturing Jerusalem and even Suleiman's beloved capital, Constantinople. The sultan, on the other hand, was significantly influenced by stories of Alexander the Great and saw himself as taking up the mighty ruler's mantle.

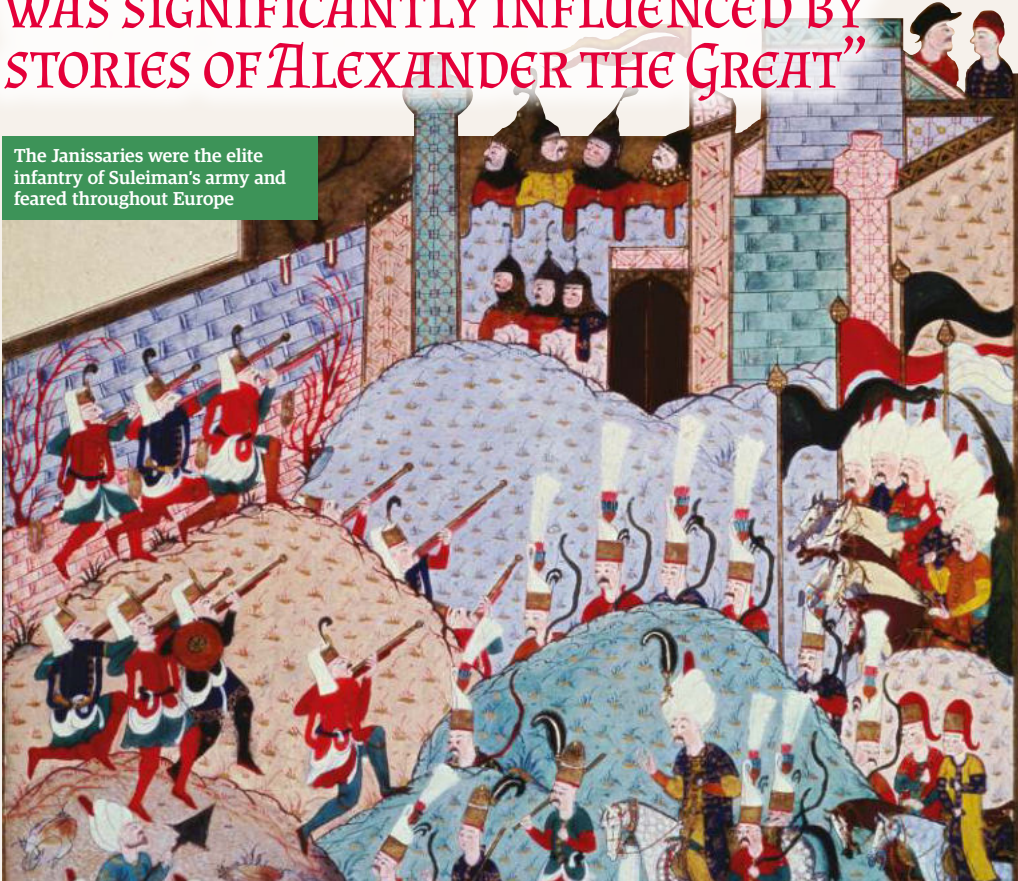
Suleiman may have also envied Charles who, through numerous inheritances, ruled an even greater territory than him. This included swathes



A contemporary painting of Suleiman the Magnificent

“THE SULTAN, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCED BY STORIES OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT”

The Janissaries were the elite infantry of Suleiman's army and feared throughout Europe



of western, central and southern Europe, along with the Spanish colonies in the Americas and Asia. Long before Victorian Britain appropriated it, Charles' realm was described by Spanish priest Fray Francisco de Ugalde as “the empire on which the sun never sets”.

Charles, who was also connected to Henry and Francis by marriage (at least until the English king divorced Catherine of Aragon), was a major political player, while Suleiman was an outsider. And yet, as history would show, his influence over the course of the 16th century was immense and, as one biographer wrote, even Charles, the most powerful man in Europe, spent most of his life dancing to the tune called by the sultan.

In July 1521, the newly crowned Suleiman made his intentions very clear: he marched west. At the head of an army of 6,000 horsemen of the imperial guard, the elite infantry units of the Janissaries, foot soldiers and 200 strapping young men from prominent families, the sultan laid siege to Belgrade, a fortified city on the Danube River, then part of the Kingdom of Hungary. With a flotilla of ships also blockading the city to prevent reinforcement, it soon fell. However, unlike Charles' wild and destructive troops sacking Rome in 1527, Suleiman's army provided monetary compensation for property damaged during the invasion and any man caught marauding was immediately executed.

Suleiman had gained a foothold in Europe's heartlands, but rather than advance further, he turned his attention to the island of Rhodes. This was a Mediterranean stronghold for the Order of the Knights of Saint John, also known as the Knights Hospitaller, who were a hold-over from the Crusades. The knights were already a blight on the Ottoman Empire's ships, stealing cargoes of



IBRAHIM
I.

Suleiman as depicted by Lord Melchior in the 1500s

“HIS FORMIDABLE ELITE INFANTRY WERE THE FEARED JANISSARIES”

grain and gold and enslaving their Muslim crews. Now that Suleiman had declared war on the West, the knights could pose an even greater threat.

The sultan had inherited an already powerful naval fleet from his father and had made a considerable effort to strengthen it. With approximately 400 well-equipped ships and 100,000 fit and loyal men, he emerged victorious in Rhodes in December 1522 - though it took six months of brutal fighting.

Again, Suleiman was shrewdly merciful. Out of his respect for their ardent defence, he gave the knights 12 days to leave and allowed them to take their weapons and any valuables or religious icons they desired. Suleiman also ordered that any inhabitants of the island who wished to leave would be able to do so at any time within a three-year period.

Suleiman chose to rule not through fear but by winning over an otherwise hostile population, and so the inhabitants of Rhodes were encouraged to stay, albeit as his subjects. Importantly, he did not

compel the Christians to adopt Islam and he promised that no church would be desecrated or turned into a mosque. In

fact, much of Suleiman's approach to expansion was very diplomatic.

For decades, the Moors and Jews expelled from Spain had flocked to Constantinople, which acquired a reputation for being a city of tolerance; all religions could be practised freely without fear of persecution. These new citizens contributed their skills as merchants, craftsmen and bankers. It is true that all non-Muslims had to pay an additional tax, which contributed to the Ottoman coffers, but they could live in peace.

Suleiman sent envoys into the mountain ranges near Transylvania, to the chieftains of the Bosnians and Croats, where he further cultivated loyalty through peaceful relations. In parts of Greece that had come under Ottoman rule, it was reported that farmers flourished more than they had under the Venetians. Greek and French merchants enjoyed a thriving trade and the Ottoman Empire was generally viewed as a realm



The sultan watches over the execution of prisoners in Belgrade



The Battle of Preveza showed that the Ottomans were a force to be reckoned with

of stability. What began as a fear of a 'Turkish Terror' in Eastern Europe evolved into 'Pax Turcica', the Turkish Peace.

Things were not the same in Western Europe. Francis I and Charles V were almost constantly at war; in the words of Francis' sister, they were born to hate each other. Interestingly, it was his enmity with Charles that forced Francis to look to the Ottoman Empire as a potential ally.

When the Holy Roman emperor took Francis hostage after the Battle of Pavia in 1525, the French king's mother suggested a rapprochement with the sultan. Suleiman saw an opportunity, a new way of furthering his position on the chessboard of Europe, and wrote a rousing and reassuring letter of support to Francis. It was a circumspect and subtle beginning to the Franco-Ottoman alliance that would span centuries, one judged by Europe as "the impious alliance" and "the sacrilegious union of the Lily and the Crescent."

In 1526, Suleiman, with Francis' tacit encouragement, marched on Hungary and defeated their king at the Battle of Mohács. But

THE SULTAN'S ARCHITECT

Mimar Sinan's creative genius helped forge Suleiman's golden age



Mimar Sinan was a Janissary in Suleiman's army for most of his early life and eventually became captain of the guard. This allowed him to travel abroad on numerous campaigns to places like Egypt and Greece, inspiring and developing his love for architecture and engineering.

Although he only began his architectural career at the age of 46, his flair and genius were quickly recognised and earned him the position of royal architect. His career spanned three sultans — Suleiman and his two successors, Selim II and Murad II. In their honour, Sinan would complete over 300 structures, ranging from mosques to palaces, baths and pavilions, many of which are considered to be the finest examples of Islamic architecture.

Sinan is most famous for three architectural triumphs: the Şehzade Mosque, built for Suleiman's son Mehmed; the dazzling Süleymaniye Mosque in modern-day Istanbul; and the elegant Mosque of Selim II in Edirne. He was greatly influenced by the 6th-century Byzantine architecture of Constantinople, in particular the Hagia Sophia, whose domes dominated the capital's skyline.

Sinan's works became the apogee of Ottoman architecture as he used the classical dome structure for his mosques, each erected majestically on top of one another, framed by tall, slender minarets and surrounded by peaceful gardens. He began to play with the design, building pyramid-like bases, changing the proportions, opening the interior of the structure, and creating windows to allow more light.

The architect is believed to have remarked, "The Şehzade is my apprentice work, Süleymaniye my achievement, and the Selimiye my masterwork." Yet any visitor to Istanbul would agree that his Süleymaniye Mosque was a triumph of architecture and design, a mesh of angular and spherical surfaces, and today it still stands as a colossal symbol of the Ottoman Empire.



The beautiful interior of the Şehzade Mosque in modern-day Istanbul

HENRY VIII



MILITARY STRENGTH	5
WANTED TO CONSOLIDATE HIS DYNASTY	
RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE	4
LOW-MEDIUM	
POPULATION	2
3 MILLION	
TOTAL AREA	1
151,000 KM²	
CONQUESTS	2
NOT MANY ATTEMPTS MADE	

SULEIMAN



MILITARY STRENGTH	9
LED THE FEARED JANNISARIES	
RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE	6
HIGH	
POPULATION	7
5 MILLION	
TOTAL AREA	9
2,273,720 KM²	
CONQUESTS	
AN ABLE MILITARY STRATEGIST	

the Ottomans' most ambitious expedition and thrust towards the West would ultimately result in failure: in 1529, Suleiman marched through the valley of the Danube and laid siege to Vienna. It would be his first defeat and, despite a second attempt in 1532, the very heart of the Holy Roman Empire eluded him.

Still, Suleiman's armies had struck fear among his European counterparts. His formidable elite infantry were the feared Janissaries, formed from prisoners of war and slaves but mostly recruited from Christian children in Greece, Albania and the Balkans. Taken into the heart of the Ottoman Empire, they were trained and tutored to become the finest troops and were the most loyal defenders of the sultan.

The Austrian ambassador Ogier de Busbecq wrote some years later that the sultan's forces showed incredible discipline: they were patient,

EMPIRE TOP TRUMPS

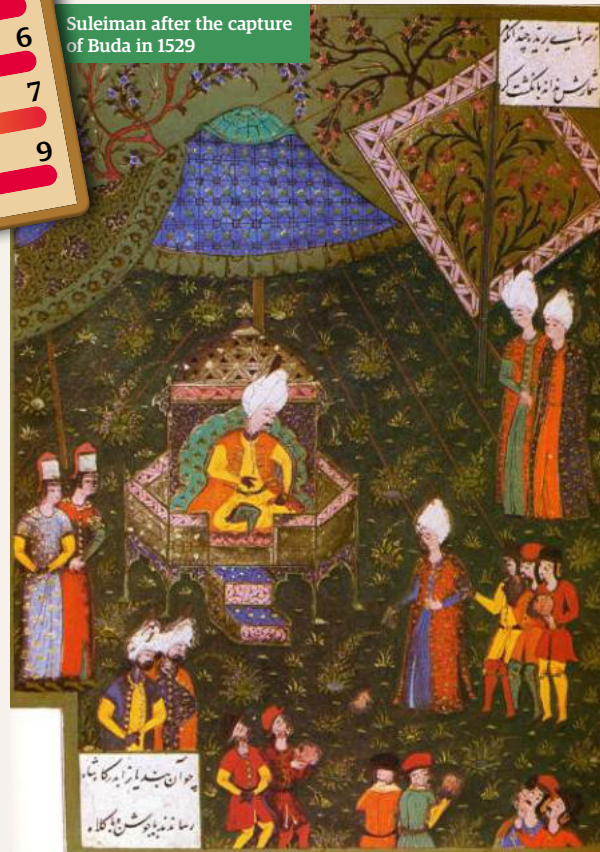
How do the leaders compare against each other?

CHARLES V



MILITARY STRENGTH	8
HAD A LARGE, FEROCIOUS ARMY	
RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE	2
LOW	
POPULATION	9
28 MILLION	
TOTAL AREA	9
4,000,000 KM²	
CONQUESTS	8
VERY MILITARILY CAPABLE	

Suleiman after the capture of Buda in 1529



obedient, never prone to brawling and, above all, fearless. They abstained from alcohol and lived on a diet of turnips, cucumber, garlic, salt and vinegar. They only drank water, which they mixed, once or twice a day, with flour, a small bit of butter, powdered beef and spices – perhaps the Ottoman Empire's answer to the modern day protein shake. Busbecq concluded, "I dread to think what the future holds for us when I compare the Turkish system to ours."

But ambassadors wrote to their monarchs of more than the Ottomans' military might. The details of the Ottoman court itself, described in vivid detail in the reports of Holy Roman, French and Venetian ambassadors, reveal a world of grandeur, opulence and refinement. Soon, Ottoman dress, art and culture permeated Europe, becoming some of the most highly prized elements of the period. Throughout Suleiman's reign there was enormous admiration for this inventive, intelligent monarch. Suleiman had once been called the 'Scourge of Heaven' – now he was known as 'the Magnificent'.

Suleiman wore elaborate floor-length caftans made of satins and silks, often lined with sable and patterned in ways that made even the most extravagant of European monarchs look drab and pedestrian. He was also partial to shirts made of soft white linen, lined with white cotton faced with rose-coloured silk, all perfumed with aloe wood, and the sultan never wore the same clothes twice.



He dined on a silver table using silver plates and drank wine from a goblet made from a single piece of turquoise. With over 50 courses served by 200 attendants wearing red silk and gold-embroidered hats, the sultan and his court would eat in halls filled with thick carpets and cloths of gold. His tables were laden with an array of seafood from the Bosphorus:

lobster, sturgeon, muscles, swordfish.

Henry VIII may have a reputation for indulgence, even gluttony, but his feasts paled in comparison to Suleiman's.

The beauty of Turkish dress and carpets captured the attention and imagination of Europe. From the Doge's

Palace in Venice – through which Ottoman art, textiles and culture flowed – to Hampton Court, plush, vibrant textiles and carpets were a symbol of wealth and sophistication. Henry VIII himself, on several occasions, even participated in court masques dressed as a Turk.

In 1532, Venetian merchants sold Suleiman a gold throne studded with jewels and pearls, estimated to cost 40,000 ducats. He sat in his great hall on his ornate throne receiving gifts: cotton from Egypt, damask from Syria; from Mosul, silver plates, cloth of gold and lapis lazuli. Suleiman was particularly fond of Chinese porcelain and he imported furs and Arabian horses. Even on campaigns, the sultan made an impression.

Contemporary descriptions of his triumphal march to Vienna in 1532 describe foot soldiers and cavalry troops followed by standard-bearers carrying flags with Ottoman crescents and the prophet Muhammad's name embroidered in pearls and jewels. 12 pages followed, carrying costly helmets glittering with gemstones. One of the most famous ones was a golden helmet of four crowns, all with enormous 12-carat pearls, diamonds, rubies and a large turquoise stone. It was a triumph of Venetian craftsmanship and, rather curiously, bore a striking resemblance to the papal tiara.

Suleiman rode on a magnificent horse, the saddle of which was estimated to be worth 70,000 ducats, while its chamfron – the plate designed to protect the horse's face – boasted a piece of turquoise as large as an egg. The sultan wore a large turban and a fur-lined gold brocade caftan of royal purple embroidered with jewels. Around his neck, he wore a gold chain that was so heavy it required attendants to ride on both sides to relieve the weight.

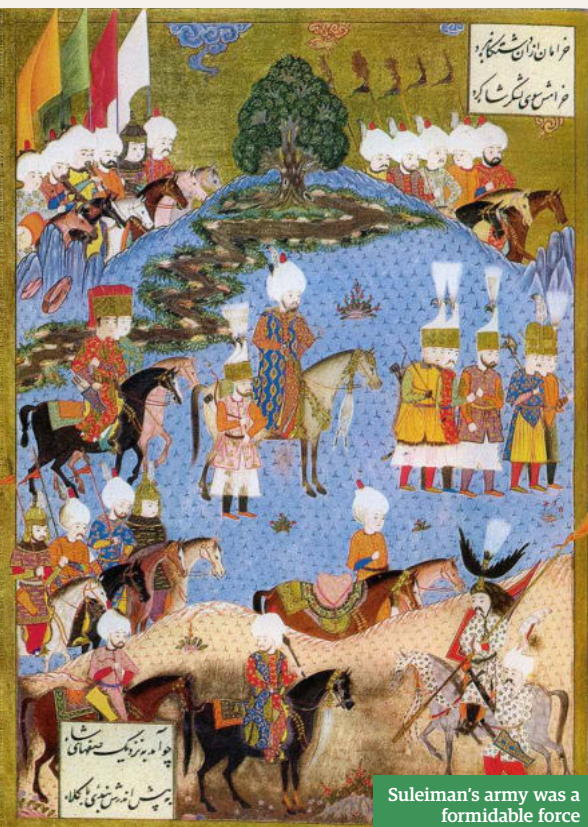
But Suleiman himself earned the admiration of visitors to his court. Ambassador Busbecq was impressed by his wise approach to advisors and councillors. He wrote that "in making his appointments the sultan pays no

THE EMPIRE OF SULEIMAN



7. The Crescent and the Lily

The alliance between France and the Ottoman Empire shocked the rest of Christian Europe to its very core. This important foreign alliance was maintained until the Napoleonic wars.



Suleiman's army was a formidable force

The Ottoman Empire would flourish and grow under Suleiman's leadership

1. End of an era

Garrisoned by the Knights Hospitaller, the island of Rhodes was one of the last Latin strongholds left from the Crusades. After a long and bloody siege, Suleiman's might overcame the order and captured the fortress.

2. The fall of Rome

The city of Constantinople would sit at the heart of the empire. Captured by one of his predecessors, Mehmet II, Suleiman would patronise some of its most iconic landmarks, like the Süleymaniye Mosque.



3. The Ottoman tide is stopped

After two failed sieges, Suleiman is forced to abandon his ambitions of taking the Habsburg capital. This would be the furthest the Ottomans would advance into Europe.

4. A clash of kings

One of the most influential battles in Europe, the Battle of Mohács saw Suleiman decisively defeat the Kingdom of Hungary and their European allies. After the victory, Hungary all but ceased to be an independent entity.

6. Out of Africa

The lawless lands of the Libyan coast were brought under Ottoman rule with the capture of Tripoli in 1551. From this base, the Barbary pirates would have free reign to attack shipping throughout the Mediterranean.

5. Arch rivals

Territorial disputes between the Ottomans and the neighbouring Safavid dynasty of Iran saw war break out in 1532. The capture of Baghdad in 1534 solidified Suleiman's rule in parts of Mesopotamia for the next 100 years.

KEY

Empire conquered by Suleiman
Empire inherited by Suleiman
Empire of Charles V

ROXELANA: THE OTTOMAN ANNE BOLEYN

Roxelana's astonishing success at Suleiman's court was attributed not only to her beauty but also to her intelligence and ambition

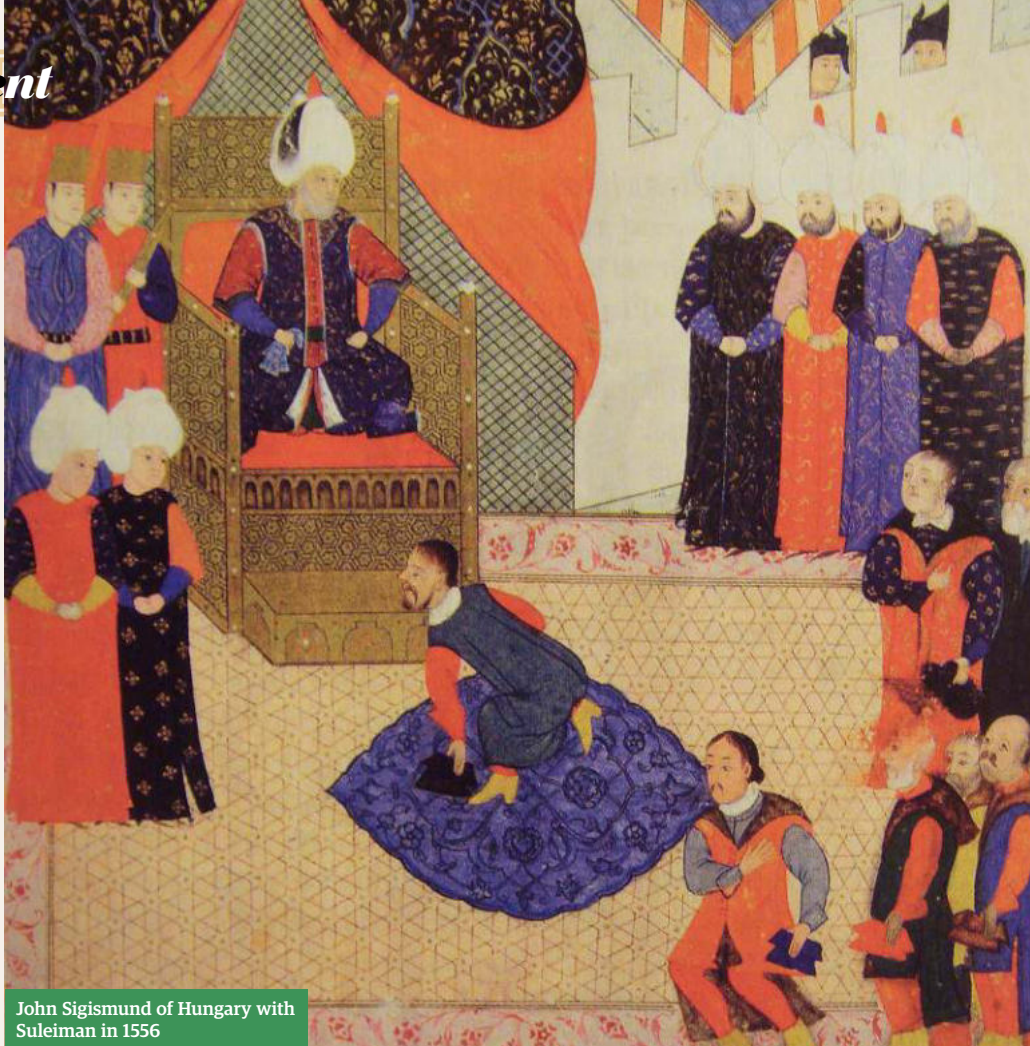
A young woman appeared at Suleiman's court in 1523, captured by Turkish raiders in Galatia. It is believed that she was originally from Ruthenia, in present-day Ukraine, and so she was given the nickname 'Roxelana', meaning 'the Russian' or the 'Ruthenian One'. She was fair with long red hair and, while in the sultan's harem, her beauty, bright, witty nature and sharp intelligence caught the sultan's eye and she soon became a favourite. But this was only the beginning.

Suleiman made the unprecedented move of forsaking all other women in his harem and became devoted only to Roxelana. It was rumoured that she ensured things would stay that way by burning the harem down so that to remain with her beloved she had to move into the sultan's apartments until a new harem could be rebuilt. It never was.

Such was Suleiman's unwavering devotion to her that he made her chief consort, supplanting Mahidevran, mother to the sultan's only son. But it was his unprecedented decision to marry Roxelana, making her his queen, that astounded the country as it broke with centuries of tradition. As with so many powerful and influential women, it was rumoured by those who resented Roxelana's success that she had 'bewitched' the sultan. Certainly his poems to Roxelana remain some of the most famous and passionate love poems of the age and suggest a man utterly entranced.

But Roxelana was an extraordinary woman. She was intelligent, ambitious, charitable and strategic. She was not only wife and queen, but for many years she served as Suleiman's chief advisor on matters of state and she played an influential role in foreign and domestic politics. She had numerous political rivals, namely Suleiman's loyal friend and advisor Ibrahim Pasha, with whom she was locked in a deadly battle for Suleiman's favour and from which she emerged triumphant.

Suleiman made the unprecedented move of making Roxelana his queen in 1530



John Sigismund of Hungary with Suleiman in 1556

“SULEIMAN WAS ALSO A GREAT PATRON OF ARTISTS AND PHILOSOPHERS”

regard to any pretensions on the score of wealth or rank, nor does he take into consideration recommendations or popularity; he considers each case on its own merits, and examines carefully into the character, ability, and disposition of the man. Each man carries in his own hand his ancestry and his position in life, which he may make or mar as he will.”

While the Europeans described Suleiman as magnificent for his opulence, his subjects gave him the title of 'Kanuni', meaning 'Lawgiver'. He embarked on a series of administrative reviews and made major legislative changes in the areas of education, taxation and criminal law. His reforms assisted in bridging the two forms of Ottoman law, sultan's and Sharia, and were called 'Qanun-e-Osmani', or the 'Ottoman Laws'. These would stay in place for three centuries.

Suleiman was also a great patron of artists and philosophers. Artists and highly skilled calligraphers, such as Ahmad Karahisari and Kara Memi, were welcome at court. The sultan financed developments in numerous fields, particularly manuscript painting, textiles and ceramics.

In his youth, as with most sultans, Suleiman learned a trade, in his case goldsmithing, and he personally oversaw the work of craftsmen in Topkapı Palace. He also commissioned an ambitious building programme and was a patron of the great architect, Mimar Sinan, who built the iconic Süleymaniye and Selimiye Mosques.

Suleiman loved poetry and considered himself something of a poet, writing under the pseudonym 'Muhabbi', meaning 'beloved and affectionate friend'. His works have been described as “lyrical, mystical, humble and sincere” and he focused on the loneliness of his position, his love of his country, his acceptance of destiny and his love of beautiful things.

Perhaps above all, he wrote passionate and romantic poetry to the woman who would convert to Islam to be with him and transcend the position of concubine to stand by his side as queen – Roxelana. Towards the end of his reign, however, Suleiman gave up his rich costumes, jewels, gold, wine, poetry and music.

Like Charles, Suleiman seemed to prefer religious humility in his old age. He died at the age of 72, fighting Charles' successor, Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II. His death was kept a secret lest it destroy morale. In keeping with tradition, his body was washed, hands laid across his chest, and his nose, eyes and ears were stuffed with cotton wool. He was then wrapped in a single piece of silk and buried in his beloved Süleymaniye Mosque facing Mecca.

At the time of his death, Suleiman was the longest-reigning sultan of the Ottoman Empire and he had outlived his four European adversaries, with whom he had spent decades in enmity and alliance. Never again would the Ottoman Empire command such respect and admiration.

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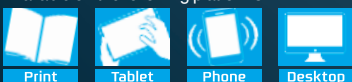


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What if... The US had started eating hippos?

The American diet - and its landscape - could have looked very different had the country taken a radical step to feed its growing nation

Written by Jack Parsons

In 1910, the US was facing a meat crisis. The price of beef was soaring because the nation's farmland had been ruined by overgrazing, making it harder to raise cattle, while America's population had never been greater thanks to three decades of high immigration. Up until this point, the US had responded to food shortages by expanding west, but the country had run out of frontiers to cultivate. One radical solution was to import hippopotamuses from Africa and start ranching them in swamplands.

"It was taken very seriously!" says Sarah Gailey, author of the alternative history novel *River of Teeth*. "This idea was considered a potential solution to a major problem in the US. I don't think that the logistics were considered properly, but the core concept - we should import hippos, breed them, and eat them - was considered relatively foolproof by a lot of people."

Robert F Broussard, a Louisiana congressman, led a hearing before the House Committee of

Agriculture to make the case for importing hippos. This included testimonies from the frontiersman Frederick Russell Burnham, who had spent years living as a scout in South Africa, and Fritz Duquesne, a Boer hunter who had given a series of lectures on East Africa's 'wonderland' across the US.

In part due to Burnham and Duquesne's charisma, the newspapers fell in love with the idea. The *Washington Post* declared Americans would be eating hippo meat in just a few years, while the *New York Times* euphemistically called it "lake cow bacon". Former president Theodore Roosevelt, an old friend of Burnham's, also supported the cause. But, despite the hype, Broussard's 'hippo bill' failed.

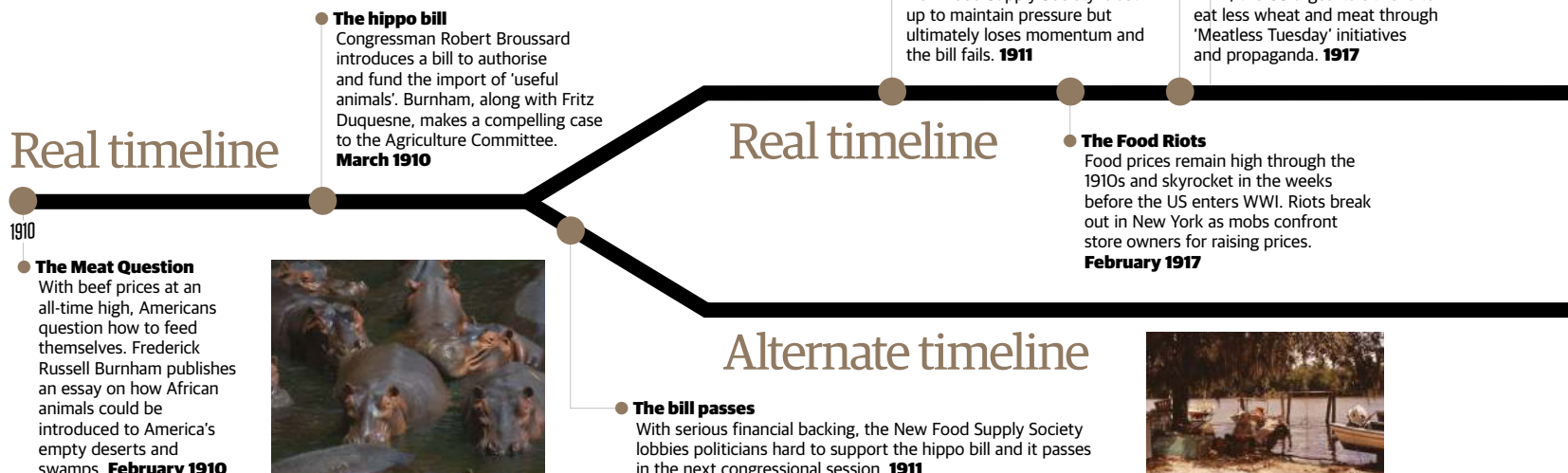
"The primary downfall of the hippo bill was the revelation of the true nature of the beast itself. Unlike cows, which are generally considered slow and docile, hippos are fast and aggressive," says Gailey. "I think that, to change that history, the parties involved would have needed a greater degree of wilful ignorance or a greater degree

of stubborn belief in the ability of Americans to do anything they decide to do, regardless of data to the contrary."

One motivation for 'wilful ignorance' Gailey gives is if the bill was tied into the financial interests of a political party. After the hearing, Broussard, Burnham and Duquesne formed the New Food Supply Society to lobby their cause. If the Society had received financial backing from a wealthy patron, perhaps Roosevelt, they may have been able to sway Congress to pass the bill.

However, Gailey is not confident that hippo ranching would have solved America's food problems. "I think it would have been a boom-and-bust industry that would have left a lot of people hungry in the end." But she also thinks it could have had a significant environmental impact. "The hippo bill was not solely focused on hippos - it allowed for the importation of other exotic animals for consumption. The impact of these importations on American ecology cannot be overstated."

How would it be different?



What if... THE US HAD STARTED EATING HIPPOS?



SARAH GALEY



Sarah Gailey is an internationally published author of fiction and non-fiction, a Hugo and Campbell award finalist and a contributor for Tor.com and Barnes & Noble. Her first novella, *River of Teeth*, imagines a world where hippo ranching in Louisiana did happen.

● The agricultural depression

The value of produce begins to fall as Europe starts to feed itself again, leaving US farmers who bought extra acreage in the boom years unable to pay their mortgages. **1921**

● The Dust Bowl

Several years of aggressive wheat farming cause the Great Plains lose their drought-resistant grasses and fertile topsoil — an environmental catastrophe. **1932**

● Government intervention

The Agricultural Adjustment Act sets limits on the size of the crops and herds that American farmers can produce in return for paying them a subsidy. **1933**

● Antibiotics embraced

The marvel of antibiotics also revolutionises farming, offering a cheap method to accelerate livestock growth and bring them up to market weight faster. **1950s**

● Factory farming

Keeping livestock in pens — rather than ranging freely over grasslands — to both maximise space and fatten up animals faster is widely adopted across the country. **1970s**

● Greater diversification

After the success in Louisiana, ranches begin to spread across to Florida. More varied African species are imported to test America's appetite, including big game for hunting. **1913**

● 'Hippo meat for the fleet'

With war-torn Europe unable to produce its own food, American produce is in high demand, which encourages many to risk hippo and ostrich ranching. **1915**

● Market crash

Just like other farmers, hippo ranchers are affected by the post-war period's plummeting food prices and they struggle to pay off the high loans used to buy their exotic animals. **1921**

● Selective breeding

After generations of breeding them for meat, American hippos start to look increasingly different to their African cousins — they are larger in size but have a more placid temperament. **1950s**

● Proof of concept

The first imported hippos are ranches in the Louisiana Bayous. As hoped, they eat the weeds that are blocking the waterways, guaranteeing Robert F Broussard's re-election to Congress. **1912**

● War breaks out

With fighting in Africa and U-boats skulking in the Atlantic Ocean, the importation of exotic species is becoming increasingly difficult, so America breeds its own hippos. **1914**

● Hippo attack

An inexperienced rancher looking to get rich quick during the economic boom accidentally invades a male hippo's territory and is fatally mauled. **1918**

● Changed ecology

Decades of African animals thriving in the US has a knock-on effect for native American species and plant life. **1970s**

Terrible trebuchets

The Crusaders constructed man-powered trebuchets to batter the walls with large stones. A wooden beam swung on a vertical axis to hurl stones loaded into its sling. In the final weeks of the siege, the Anglo-Normans battered one stretch of wall around the clock.

Mighty tower

The Anglo-Norman siege tower dwarfed the walls of Lisbon so that the Crusaders could lower the bridge onto the rampart. The tower was draped in dampened animal hides meant to absorb the force of stones from enemy trebuchets and thwart efforts to set the tower alight.

Garrison artillery

The Moors had their own siege artillery mounted on battlements atop the massive gates of the city and also in the citadel. The defending trebuchets were able to inflict casualties on the attackers, as well as damage their siege equipment through direct hits.



Sinister cat

The Anglo-Normans built a 'Welsh cat' designed to protect miners who dug underneath a section of the western wall in order to collapse it from below. The cat was a wheeled siege engine with a roof made of hides designed to absorb the force of stones dropped on it from the battlements.



Prizes and plunder

To persuade the Crusaders to join his cause, King Afonso I of Portugal said that the Anglo-Norman, German and Flemish forces would receive the plunder of Lisbon's inhabitants and the money derived from ransoming high-ranking captives, while he would get full control of the citadel and surrounding city.

Crusader navy

Control of the Tagus estuary, which led out to sea, was essential to a successful siege of Lisbon. A few ships routinely patrolled the river to intercept attempts to smuggle food into the city, which the Crusaders knew was desperately running out of supplies.



SIEGE OF LISBON

LISBON, PORTUGAL, 1 JULY – 24 OCTOBER 1147

Written by William E. Welsh

As Europeans were preparing to celebrate Christmas in 1144, more than 4,000 kilometres to the southeast, Seljuk warriors captured the Frankish stronghold of Edessa. The bold move by the governor of Mosul sent shockwaves through Christendom. The County of Edessa in Upper Mesopotamia had been the first crusader state founded to stop Muslim nations from expanding into the Holy Land in 1098 – and now it was the first to fall.

Fearing that the Kingdom of Jerusalem would be next, Pope Eugene III called for a new crusade to recapture the fallen fortress. The principal crusade preacher, Bernard of Clairvaux, promoted the cause in Flanders and Friesland in 1146. Eugene and Bernard also wrote letters to the English requesting their assistance, which were then read aloud in churches and cathedrals.

In response to the call, 10,000 Anglo-Normans, Flemish and Germans set sail on the Second Crusade in 1147. However, when the fleet dropped anchor to replenish supplies at Porto in northern Portugal, emissaries of the Portuguese king, Afonso I, were waiting for them. Before they sailed on, he wanted their help liberating Lisbon from Moorish occupation. Though many of the Crusaders were initially resistant, the monarch persuaded them by promising them all of the plunder in the city, plus the money that would be made from ransoming high-ranking hostages.

Lisbon was ruled by the Almoravid dynasty. Once a mighty force in the region, by 1147 they had lost ground to several foes in Iberia and were in the midst of an internal power struggle with a rebel force, the Almohad Caliphate. This meant the Almoravids were caught off guard when the Crusaders sailed up the Tagus and disembarked

at Lisbon on 28 June. The 4,500 Anglo-Normans encamped on the west side of the city and the 5,500 Flemish and Germans bivouacked together to the east. The two camps built siege towers and trebuchets to batter the city's walls.

The Muslim garrison sortied frequently to torch the Crusaders' siege engines. But in late summer, the Crusaders intercepted a message intended for the ruler of neighbouring Evora, in which Lisbon requested aid as the city had nearly exhausted its supplies. They also seized the reply stating that there would be no relief army, which was forwarded to the enemy garrison to shatter its morale.

The Crusaders launched an attack in mid-October to stretch the city's defences. The Flemish and Germans torched the timbers in a large mine, collapsing a 60-metre section of wall, but the defenders plugged the breach. Shortly after, the Anglo-Normans pushed a siege tower against the fortress' southwest corner. With archers covering them, the knights stormed onto the ramparts. Fearing slaughter, the Muslims surrendered.

Despite the easy victory, dividing the spoils nearly went awry. The Crusaders squabbled with Afonso over control of the captives held for ransom, and the German-Flemish soldiers also disrupted the orderly process of confiscating the property of the residents for an even distribution of the booty, pouring into the city and violently ransacking it.

After wintering in Lisbon, the Crusaders who weren't injured during the siege or lost their zeal for holy war sailed for Jerusalem on 1 January 1148. Once in the Holy Land, they joined forces with French, German and local Crusaders in a failed attack on Damascus. They didn't even try to reach Edessa. In the end, the siege of Lisbon stood out as the only victory in a drearily unsuccessful crusade.



Crusader Army of Northern Europe

TROOPS 13,000
SHIPS 200



KING AFONSO I OF PORTUGAL

LEADER

The Portuguese king knew that a naval blockade was essential to the success of the siege to prevent men and supplies from arriving by water.

Strengths A seasoned commander with impressive diplomatic skills who dealt fairly with the Crusaders.

Weakness Afonso left the bulk of the fighting to the Crusaders, which diminished his stature.

CRUSADER KNIGHTS

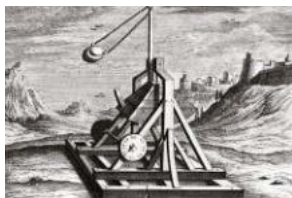
KEY UNIT

Leaders of men who wore helmets and mail and wielded metre-long iron swords.

Strengths High morale as a result of years of training and experience.

Weakness

Crossbow bolts could penetrate their mail.



TREBUCHET

KEY WEAPON

Crew pulled ropes on the wide end of the beam, which hurled a stone in a sling tied to the opposite end.

Strengths Could fire around the clock with crews working in shifts.

Weakness No guarantee of success against tall and sturdy walls made of hard rock.

01 Street battle in the suburbs

Anglo-Norman knights and archers fight their way through the western suburbs on the afternoon of 1 July to gain control of the base of the walls for mining purposes. Muslim archers and crossbowmen, supported by troops on the roofs of the houses bombarding the Crusaders with rocks, hold the Crusaders back for six hours. Despite the fierce resistance shown by the defenders in the steep and narrow streets, the Crusaders secure the suburbs.

02 Engines of war

After two weeks spent collecting timber, the Crusaders encamped on both sides of the city construct a variety of siege machines, including moveable siege towers, trebuchets and wheeled sheds and rams. The Muslim garrison conducts repeated sorties in which they torch the Crusaders' wooden siege weapons.

03 Flying bridges destroyed

Ships attempt to lower flying bridges onto the walls along the river so that troops can fight their way onto the parapets. The defenders use stone-throwing machines to destroy them.

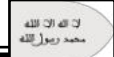
04 Sign of determination

The Crusaders beach the majority of their vessels and stow the masts and sails to signal to the garrison that they intend to stay through the winter if necessary to capture the city. The garrison troops had hoped that the Crusaders would become frustrated with their lack of success and depart for the Holy Land. This lowers the garrison's morale.

05 Devastating bombardment

A pair of Anglo-Norman trebuchets batter the west wall near the Iron Gate as the siege enters its final stage. They are able to fire an average of eight stones per minute.





Muslim Army of Almoravid Dynasty

TROOPS 15,000
SHIPS 0

UNKNOWN GARRISON COMMANDER

LEADER

The anonymous commander aggressively resisted the invasion by launching repeated sorties to burn Crusader siege equipment.

Strengths Maintained an active defence throughout the nearly four-month siege.

Weakness He was unable to find a relief army to come to the aid of the beleaguered garrison.



GARRISON TROOPS

KEY UNIT

The garrison troops relied heavily on projectile and missile weapons such as the bow, crossbow, spear and javelin.

Strengths They used an ingenious flammable mixture of wood, pitch, flax and oil to sabotage the enemy's siege engines.

Weakness The garrison had a limited supply of good weapons.



CROSSBOW

KEY WEAPON

The crossbow was ubiquitous among garrison troops and required little training to use properly.

Strengths Ample time to reload in protected positions in castle towers and walls.

Weakness The garrison likely ran low on bolts as it had no way to replenish its supply.

07 Tower stranded by high tide

A Pisan engineer directs the efforts of the Anglo-Normans to build a 25-metre-high siege tower that is completed on 19 October. The Crusaders roll the siege tower, which boasts penthouses to protect troops from stones hurled by the defenders' stone-throwing artillery, against the western wall. Much to the Crusaders' consternation, the siege tower becomes stranded at high tide. When the water recedes, the garrison unsuccessfully tries to torch it.

08 Last-minute surrender

Fighting rages for 36 hours with the siege tower just over a metre from the western wall. When it appears that the Crusaders are about to lower the tower's bridge onto the wall and fight their way into the city, the Muslims promptly surrender. In this way, the defenders avoid the worst case scenario in which the attackers would be entitled to the entire population if compelled to take the city by force.

09 Squabble among Christians

The Flemings and Germans are enraged that King Afonso is holding high-ranking hostages from the city as the surrender terms are negotiated. They claim that this violates the original terms negotiated between the Portuguese and the Crusaders. At the last minute, they are dissuaded from storming the Portuguese camp and seizing the hostages.

10 Crusaders run amok

Approximately 140 Anglo-Normans and 160 Flemish and Germans are allowed to enter the city on 24 October and supervise the collection of the money and property of the people of the city. 200 more Flemish and Germans slip into the city against orders. What was meant to be an orderly process degenerates into uncontrolled excesses and atrocities.

06 Mine collapses eastern wall

The Flemish and Rhinelanders dig an expansive mine with five separate entrances underneath the east wall. They pack the tunnels with combustible materials and light it. The fire weakens the earth and a section of the wall collapses into the ground. The defenders hurriedly build a makeshift wall with timber and block the breach.





LAWMEN

★ of the Frontier ★

Meet the real-life legends and hired guns that kept the peace in the farthest reaches of the Old West

Written by Robert Walsh

It was a time of gamblers, gunslingers and legendary lawmen. A time when law enforcement was simpler and often far more brutal. A time when badge-wearing, gun-toting lawmen became legends in their own time. Spectacular shoot-outs like the OK Corral entered history, immortalised in dime novels and Hollywood movies. Outlaws became folk heroes shrouded in myths portraying them as far better (and sometimes far worse) than they really were. Welcome to the Old West.

Extending America's western frontier was like opening Pandora's box. It brought huge advances in technology and enormous social change as

people flooded west to seek their fortunes. But with the honest citizens came the criminals.

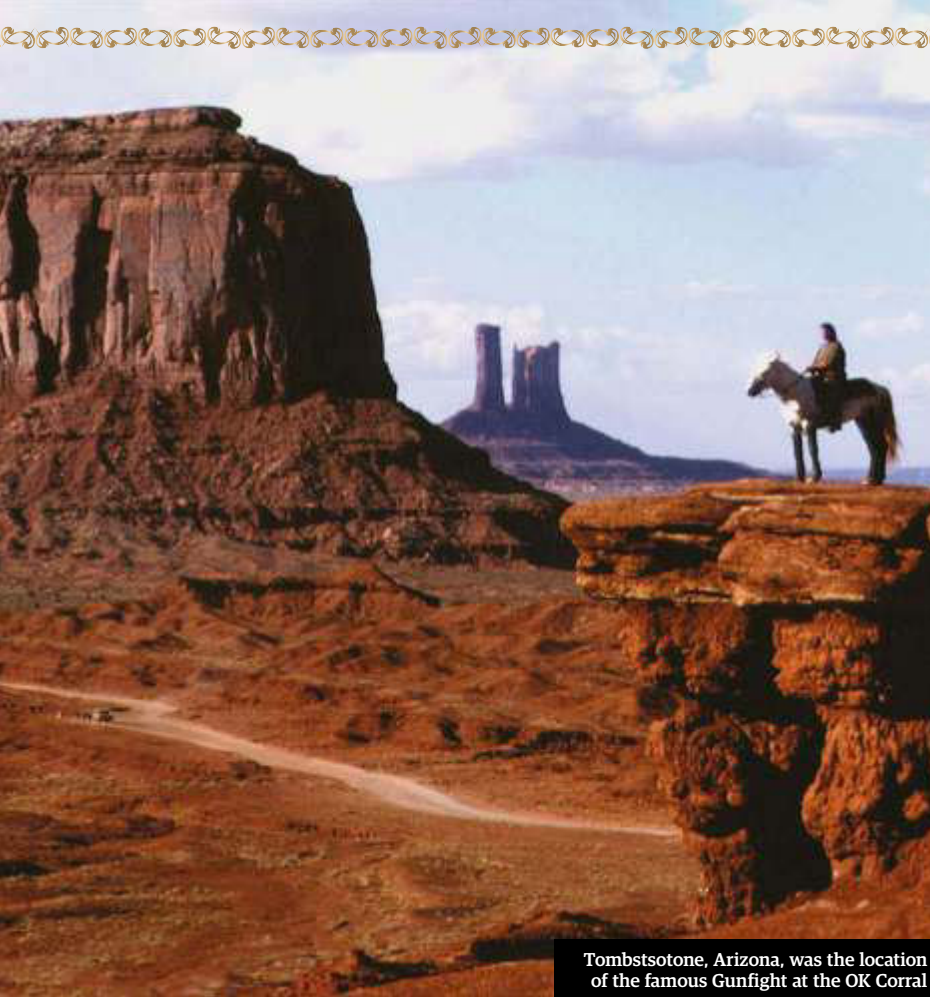
Conmen traded land they didn't own, mines that didn't exist and cattle bought from rustlers. Gamblers played (and often cheated) wherever games were tolerated. Thieves robbed banks, trains and stagecoaches almost at will. Freelance gunmen, the dreaded gunslingers, killed for anybody who paid enough. Enter the lawmen, bringing law to the lawless.

Criminals like Jesse James, Billy the Kid and Arizona's notorious 'Cowboys' were overnight sensations. Equally legendary were lawmen like Wyatt Earp, 'Bat' Masterson and Pat Garrett. But, far from the clean-cut image of films like *Shane*

and *High Noon*, the distinction between cops and robbers wasn't always as clear as it might seem.

Some blurred the line between lawman and lawbreaker. Earp was a brothel bouncer before becoming a lawman. Deputy US Marshal John 'Doc' Holliday was a dentist in Georgia before tuberculosis and scandal saw him head west. Holliday is remembered as Earp's friend, entering the OK Corral out of loyalty to him. Before arriving in Tombstone, however, Doc was already accused of at least a dozen killings.

The second half of the 19th century saw mass migration westward, bringing irrevocable change and rich pickings for criminals. Banks, trains, payrolls, mines and stagecoaches were all fair



Tombstostone, Arizona, was the location of the famous Gunfight at the OK Corral

Canadian Mounties were ruthless but well disciplined



game. As the huge ranches blossomed, cattle rustling and horse theft became profitable for those prepared to risk being shot.

Facing a crime wave, local law enforcement faced many problems. Firstly, lawmen in these fledgling frontier towns were grossly understaffed and poorly paid, while facing both outlaws' guns and criticism from town officials if they seemed weak on crime or overly heavy-handed. What's more, their jurisdiction was limited. Anyone could break the law, then cross the nearest county or state line when pursued. But the local sheriff wasn't legally allowed to keep up the chase.

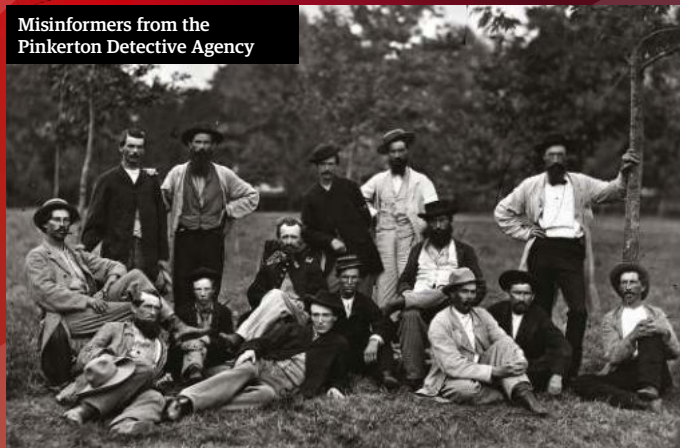
With established law often unavailable – and its enforcers often corrupt – mobs often enforced

their own rules. Frontier justice often involved a prisoner, a length of rope and the nearest available tree. Without stern law enforcers, mobs even took prisoners from jails solely to hang them high.

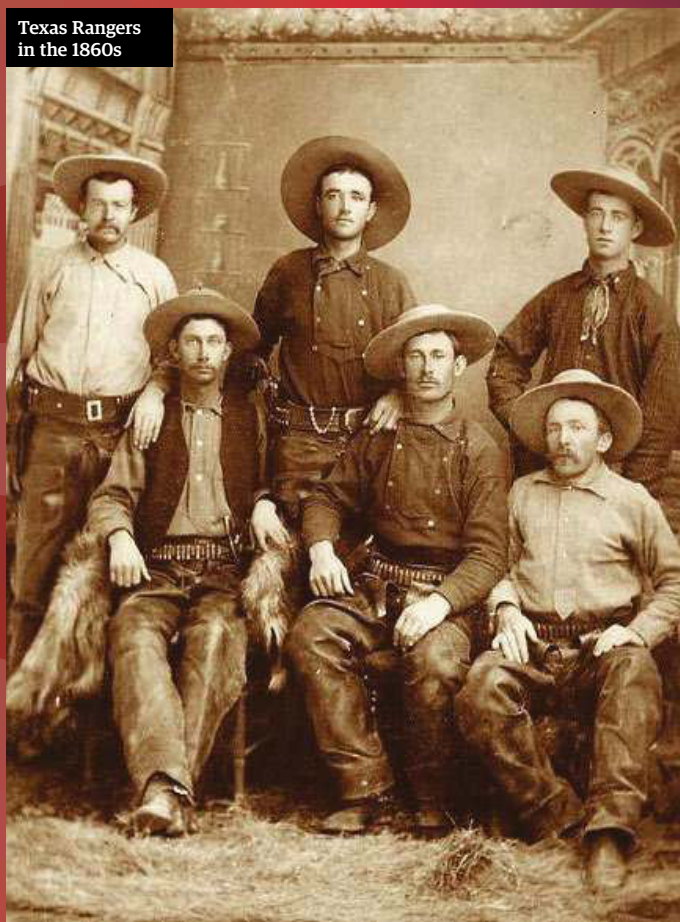
Facing a breakdown in law and order, state and national organisations were needed. The Texas

Lawmen of the Frontier

Misinformers from the Pinkerton Detective Agency



Texas Rangers in the 1860s



Rangers, Northwest Mounted Police, US Marshals and the Pinkerton Detective Agency made their names in this era and still exist today, albeit in very different forms. All of these institutions have their own distinct lineage and place in American history.

“MOBS EVEN TOOK PRISONERS FROM JAILS SOLELY TO HANG THEM HIGH”

US MARSHALS

YEARS ACTIVE: 1789-present **JURISDICTION:** Nationwide

INFAMOUS COLLARS: 'Curly' Bill Brocius, the Mason-Henry Gang, the Purdy Gang, Crawford 'Cherokee Bill' Goldsby

The US Marshals Service is America's oldest law enforcement body, founded during George Washington's presidency. Many marshals have become legends, including Wyatt Earp, his brothers Virgil and Morgan, Doc Holliday, Bat Masterson, Dallas Stoudenmire and Bass Reeves. At a time when frontier justice frequently involved a bullet or a noose, it was their job to force law on the lawless.

Dodge City, Tombstone, Abilene, Deadwood and many other towns saw

justice served with six-shooters and shotguns. Unlike state and local police, the US Marshals had national jurisdiction and any state or county without its own lawmen could request one. Feared by outlaws, they often enforced the law using Frank Hamer's methods — with a .45 in the gut.

The most famous marshal is undoubtedly Earp, whose feud with Arizona's notorious Cowboys gang and their gunfight at the OK Corral have become a part of American folklore. However, Earp wasn't the clean-cut, all-American hero you might expect. Working as bouncer, pimp and gambler before becoming a marshal, Earp crossed the line between lawman and vigilante after his brothers Virgil and Morgan were shot by

the Cowboys. Virgil lost the use of one arm. Morgan died.

Earp began his 'Vendetta Ride', during which he killed the Cowboys he believed responsible: Frank Stilwell, Florentino Cruz,

Johnny Barnes and 'Curly' Bill Brocius. Afterwards, he left Arizona and law enforcement forever.

Another group of marshals, Heck Thomas, Bill Tilghman and Chris Madsen became known as the Three Guardsmen. They policed what was then the vast Oklahoma Territory, which included the Cookson Hills and the Seminole Nation,

home to many outlaws like Jesse James, the Cook brothers, Crawford 'Cherokee Bill' Goldsby and the Doolin Gang. Decades later, the Hills were home to 1930s gangster Charles 'Pretty Boy' Floyd.

The Three Guardsmen handled the Doolin Gang simply and brutally. Members who surrendered were arrested — those who resisted died. The Cook brothers also fell before the marshals while Goldsby was hanged at Fort Smith, Arkansas, in March 1896, aged only 20. Defiant to the end, his last words were, "I came here to die, not make a speech."

Goldsby might have died along with many other outlaws, but the US Marshals live on.



Wyatt Earp's early life has been bowdlerised to make his story more family friendly



Bill Tilghman was known for his fast hand and keen eye

All about the Bass

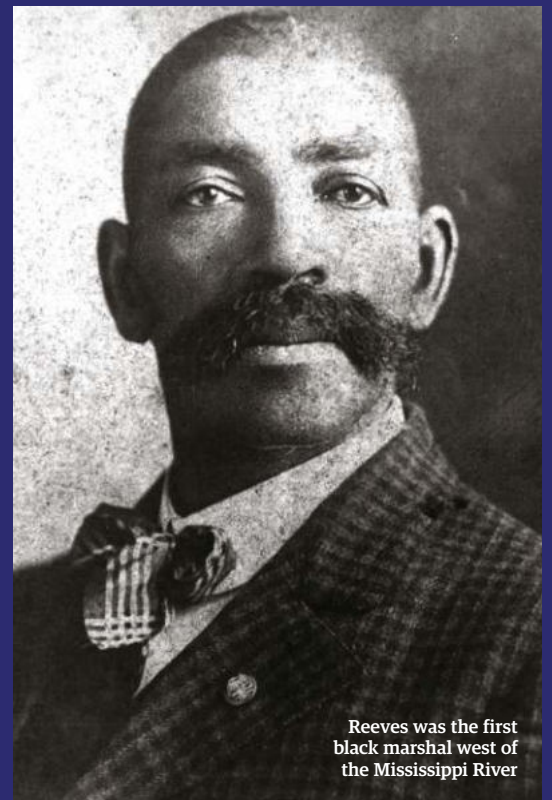
Deputy US Marshal Bass Reeves isn't as well remembered as Wyatt Earp, but he was equally remarkable. Reeves worked mainly in Arkansas and the Indian Territory. He had learnt to speak several Native American languages while hiding out among several tribes as a fugitive slave.

After abolition, Reeves joined the US Marshals in 1875 and worked with them for 32 years.

He's credited with over 3,000 arrests and 14 kills during his long career. Reeves even brought his own son to justice for murder, allegedly demanding he be the one to do it.

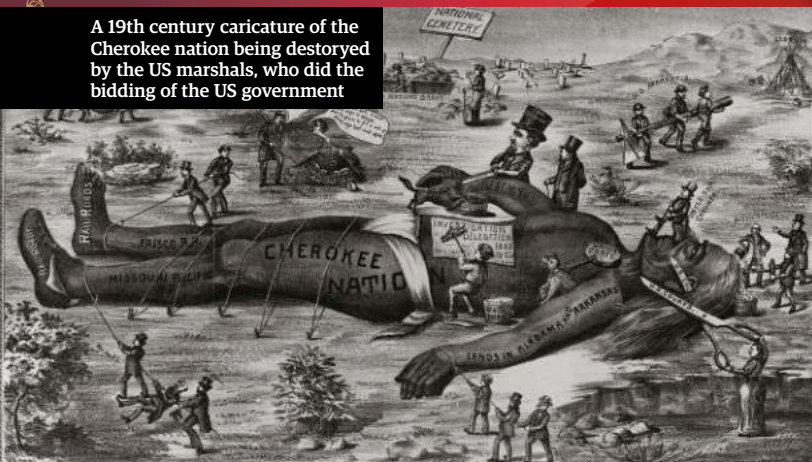
As a skilled detective and marksman, who could converse with Native Americans and — according to contemporary accounts — rode a white horse,

it has been argued Reeves may have been the basis for the Lone Ranger. However, as a pioneering figure during an era of endemic racism, Reeves deserves to be a legend in his own right.



Reeves was the first black marshal west of the Mississippi River

A 19th century caricature of the Cherokee nation being destroyed by the US marshals, who did the bidding of the US government





NORTHWEST MOUNTED POLICE

YEARS ACTIVE: 1873-present JURISDICTION: Originally the Pacific Northwest, now all over Canada
INFAMOUS COLLARS: The MacLean brothers, Louis Riel, Ernest Cashel



TEXAS RANGERS

YEARS ACTIVE: 1835-present **JURISDICTION:** The state of Texas, including the Texas-Mexico border
INFAMOUS COLLARS: John Wesley Hardin, Billy Thompson, Sam Bass, Bonnie and Clyde

The Texas Rangers are probably some of the best-known lawmen in the business. Founded in the 1830s and today part of the Texas Bureau of Investigation, they've tackled every kind of felon. Their jurisdiction covers the whole of the state of Texas including the Mexican border, always a hotbed of crime and disorder.

In keeping with the times, their early methods were usually violent. As Ranger Captain Frank Hamer bluntly put it, "We're here to enforce the law, and the best way to do it is a .45 slug in the gut."

Hamer practised what he preached. By the time he ambushed Bonnie and Clyde,

he'd already killed 53 men, been shot 17 times and left for dead four times. He was a typical old-school ranger.



John Horton Slaughter served as a Texas Ranger, Arizona sheriff and US marshal

Recruitment was based on demand. In times of crisis, as many as 300-400 men could be employed. When times were easier, rangers were simply laid off — governors could hire and fire them at their convenience and often did. Seldom a permanent job, it was almost always a dangerous one.

The Texas Rangers made their name and legacy during the Old West era, but it came at a price. To date, 105 rangers have died in the line of duty, fewer than one per cent of the individuals who have served.

When not tackling outlaws and cattle rustlers, the rangers defended the Texas-Mexico border against renegade Native Americans and Mexican bandits. In fact, the organisation was founded by prominent colonist Stephen Austin in 1823 to deal with the threat of the Native American Comanche tribe, who raided extensively all along the border using hit-and-run tactics.

Paid only \$1.25 a day with a \$10 monthly bounty in property, rangers had to provide their own horses and guns. They were skilled horsemen, trackers and marksmen and every man was fearless without being reckless. Above all, their loyalty to their oath and each other was sacrosanct. Not just law enforcers, the rangers are a part of American history and legend.

Packing a Paterson

The Texas Rangers were one of the first to embrace the Colt Paterson .36 caliber five-shot revolver as it meant they didn't have to reload as often during a fire fight.

Mexican headgear

While often depicted wearing stetson hats, in the 19th century most Texas Rangers preferred to wear broader-brimmed sombreros to better keep the sun out of their eyes.

Lone star badge

From 1875 onwards, Rangers adopted badges to identify themselves. Invariably made from a Mexican silver coin, they were cut into a star shape modelled on the state flag.

No uniform

Rangers initially had to supply their own weapons and horses and wore plain clothes. To this day, they have no formal uniform but are required to dress in a 'western' style.

Two presidents under the gun

Without doubt the most important case in their history, the Texas Rangers foiled an attempt to assassinate American president Howard Taft and Mexican president Porfirio Díaz at the same time. The leaders were to have their first summit meetings in El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, in October 1909. Tensions were high and security involved thousands of troops and lawmen on both sides of the border.

Private Moore of the Rangers and adventurer Frederick Russell Burnham (yes, the same hippo-eating Burnham from page 62) noticed a man loitering by the El Paso Chamber of Commerce along the route of the presidential procession. Suspicious, they took him aside and searched him. They discovered a loaded palm pistol, a single-shot weapon designed to be concealed in the user's palm with only the barrel visible. They foiled the plan just in the nick of time. Taft and Díaz were reportedly only feet away when the would-be assassin was thwarted.



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On leaving New York he took with him his younger brother, **EDWARD A. REILLY**, and a companion named **LOUIS CARLIN**.

The following are their descriptions:

WILLIAM F. REILLY, twenty-two years of age, five feet seven inches high, erect, medium size and well built, straight-limbed, full face, fresh complexion, rosy cheeks, brown hair thick and short, wore small light moustache and little side whiskers, features regular, pretty full broad forehead. Is of Irish descent.

EDWARD A. REILLY, sixteen years of age, five feet nine inches high, slim but strongly built, large for his age, sloping shoulders, head slightly forward, medium



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Wm F. Reilly



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Bluffer's Guide CHINA, 206 BCE – 220 CE

The Han Dynasty

Timeline

202 BCE



Rebel leader Liu Bang becomes emperor of China, taking the name Gaozu of Han after overthrowing the Qin dynasty and defeating all other rebel factions.

141 BCE



The Han dynasty's most noted ruler, Emperor Wu vastly expands the empire, embraces Confucianism and establishes the Silk Road trading route.

9 CE



Wang Mang exploits a succession crisis and usurps the Han throne, leading to the 16-year Xin dynasty.

25 CE



Liu Xiu overthrows Wang Mang and reestablishes the Han dynasty as Guangwu, making Louyang its capital city. The Eastern Han era begins.

Bluffer's Guide

THE HAN DYNASTY



What was it?

The Han dynasty governed China with only minor interruption for 400 years. This era is considered a golden age in Chinese history, with the state as powerful and prestigious in East Asia as the Roman Empire was in Europe. The dynasty presided over many scientific and artistic advances, including ironwork that was 500 years ahead of its time, the adoption of Confucianism as the state philosophy and the invention of paper.

The Han united the Chinese heartland and expanded its borders into Korea, northern Vietnam and Inner Mongolia. Expeditions into Central Asia led to the establishment of the Silk Road trade route, which would see the Chinese trading as far as India, Persia, Greece and Rome. They also extended the Great Wall and clashed regularly with the nomadic people of Central Asia – particularly the Xiongnu.

The Han reign is usually referred to as either the Western or Eastern Han, reflecting when the capital city was moved east from Chang'an to Louyang in 25 CE. This followed the brief usurpation of the throne by Wang Mang, whose rule ended after he was killed in a peasant revolt that destroyed Chang'an, forcing the Han to relocate after retaking power.



Why did it happen?

The emperor ruled as an absolute monarch, always maintaining a large army to defend China's border, but the Han were not as oppressive as previous dynasties. After the country was ravaged by war, they kept taxes low so that peasants and merchants could prosper. When the empire grew, state monopolies on salt, iron and alcohol were declared to pay for new roads, benefiting everyone.

To prevent old aristocrats from gaining too much power, the Han created Confucian colleges to train scholars to act as their advisors instead. They were trained in Chinese history, literature and Confucian teachings. The latter emphasised filial piety and living harmoniously, so may have contributed to the period's stability.

The long stability of the Han dynasty also encouraged a culture of innovation, leading to development in new technologies like the invention of paper and ironwork. The latter led to better tools, which made farming easier and ensured the empire's growing population was well fed.



Who was involved?



Emperor Gaozu

c.256 BCE - 195 BCE

The first Han came from a modest family, but found power as a rebel leader that overthrew the repressive Qin dynasty.



Emperor Wu

156 BCE - 87 BCE

The dynasty's most influential emperor, Wu embraced Confucianism, expanded the empire and established the Silk Road.



Emperor Xian

181 CE - 234 CE

The last Han emperor, Xian was a puppet ruler for warlords. His forced abdication ended the dynasty and broke up the empire.

Did you know?

The Han name lives on in the Han Chinese – the world's largest ethnic group, it numbers over 1.3 billion people.

184 CE



After years of weak government and terrible famine, the peasants rise up in the Yellow Turban Rebellion that takes the Han 21 years to put down.

220 CE



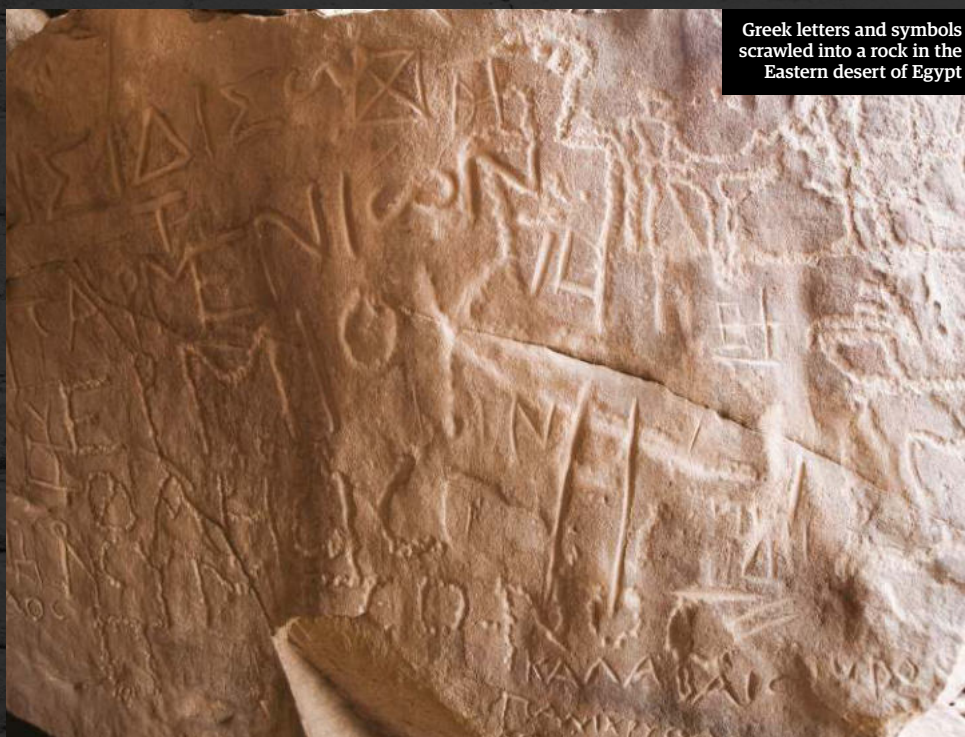
Emperor Xian is forced to abdicate, ending the Han dynasty. Wars break out between nobles and China will not unify again for another 350 years.

GRAFFITI

THROUGH THE AGES

From Roman Pompeii to modern day, a secret history
has always been written on the walls

Written by Ben Gazur



Greek letters and symbols
scrawled into a rock in the
Eastern desert of Egypt

Humans have always sought to leave their mark since the dawn of civilisation, but when history has been recorded, the voices of the masses have usually been left out. It seems many more ordinary events were not thought important enough to write down. Luckily, graffiti has helped fill that gap by offering us an unfiltered view of the period in which it was created, and we can find familiar themes in our lives like boastful comments, lewd jokes and caricatures. Graffiti cannot be easily defined, but for our purposes it is any illicitly made marking. Cave art, however powerful, can't really be thought of as graffiti in spite of the tempting similarities. An ancient handprint doesn't look forbidden and we don't have enough information to say for certain if it was. For the same reason, petroglyphs, ancient marks incised in rock, are not true graffiti.

"ANCIENT FOREIGN VISITORS LEFT THEIR MARKS, TOO"

VANDALISE LIKE AN EGYPTIAN

Most people's reaction to the words 'ancient graffiti' is to ask, "Oh, like hieroglyphs?" While the Ancient Egyptians were seemingly addicted to decorating their monumental buildings with entire walls of text, these were sanctioned by the pharaohs and so were closer to state propaganda than street art.

However, hidden between the official marks, we can find more modest ones that can truly be called graffiti. These might be as simple as a crude representation of an animal or as complex as a lovingly rendered image of a god. Unlike the acclamatory inscriptions of the pharaoh, which display his name proudly, we will never know the identity of most of these early graffiti artists.

When cameras penetrated the hidden shafts and chambers of the Great Pyramid, they found

hieroglyphs and symbols set out in red paint, left behind by work gangs as they constructed the pharaoh's monument – and they have revealed much about those unknown toilers.

The crews charged with building the pyramids liked to sign their work, perhaps revealing a rivalry between groups. The 'Friends of Khufu' might compete with the 'Drunks of Menkaure', or the 'Purples' with 'The Craftsman Gang'. These markings supports the growing evidence that the Great Pyramid was built by willing, proud labourers, rather than slaves.

It seems that as soon as you teach someone to write, they will want to scribble somewhere they shouldn't. In 1240 BCE, the treasury scribe Hadnakhte took a trip to the sacred temple

of Djoser at Saqqara and decided to mark the occasion with a graffito.

He described how he "came for a pleasant stroll... with his brother Panakhte, the scribe of the vizier." Another scribe who visited left a slightly ironic complaint about those who had come before. "I feel sick when I see the work of their hands... Their work is awful."

Ancient foreign visitors left their marks, too. In the tomb of Ramesses IV in the Valley of the Kings, 1,000 ancient inscriptions in Greek and Latin have been found. Some just record the names of the visitors, while others read like modern trip reviews – "I visited and I did not like anything except the sarcophagus!" or "I cannot read the hieroglyphs!"

Graffiti through the Ages

ROMANS GO HOME

In the 1979 Monty Python film *The Life of Brian*, the protagonist is given the unpleasant task of trying to correctly conjugate the phrase 'Romans go home!' as he paints it all over the walls of Pontius Pilate's palace in Jerusalem. The Romans themselves needed no help in making graffiti. When archaeologists began to uncover and systematically study Roman ruins, they found so many illicit markings that they had to coin the very word 'graffiti' – from the Italian for 'scratched' – for them.

The amazing preservation of Pompeii, buried in layers of ash from the catastrophic eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE, gives historians a unique insight into Roman life. There is grime among the grandeur and it feels all the more vibrant for it. The walls of Pompeii were covered in a smooth, soft layer of plaster – simply too inviting for anyone with a pot of paint or a knife.

In Pompeii we find political slogans painted directly onto the walls, showing us the average citizen's political leanings. "Epidius with his household want and support Cn. Helvius Sabinus as aedile [a magistrate]," runs one of the more straightforward signs. A bit of negative campaigning certainly wasn't out of the question: "The little thieves ask for Vatia as aedile."

They were also not afraid to mix religion with politics, either: "All the worshippers of Isis call for Cn. Helvius Sabinus as aedile." In Rome, just before Julius Caesar's assassination, slogans like "If only now you were Brutus!" and "Brutus, wake up!" began to appear, urging the senator to turn on the increasingly despotic ruler.

Graffiti gives us a window into the lives of people who we would otherwise know nothing about. Some inscriptions are just the ancient version of "So-and-so was here". Others wouldn't look out of place in a modern toilet block: "To the one defecating here. Beware of the curse..." Like boys everywhere, there was also a lot of boasting:

"Celadus the Thracian gladiator is the delight of all the girls." Other writings are simply unprintable in translation due to their explicit vividness.

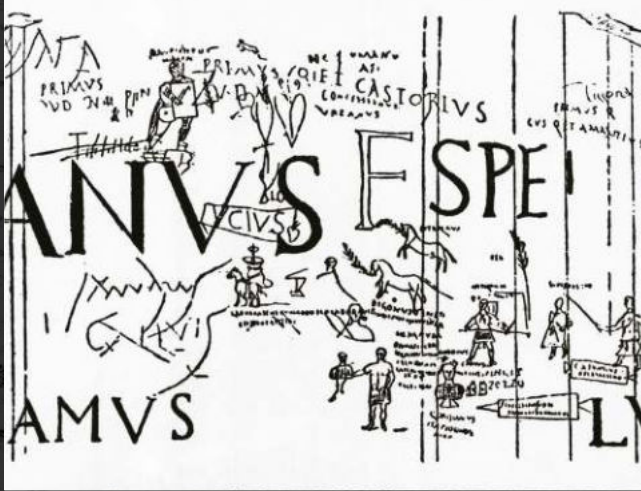
Perhaps the most fascinating graffiti from Pompeii are those left by women. Female voices from the ancient world are rare – those outside of the political or literary elite are usually almost entirely silent. On the walls of Pompeii, however, we find that "Atimetus got me pregnant," while, in another house, "I don't want to sell my husband, not for all the gold in the world."

As is the case today, graffiti was seen as a problem by at least some of the citizens. One vexed person scratched out, "O walls, you have

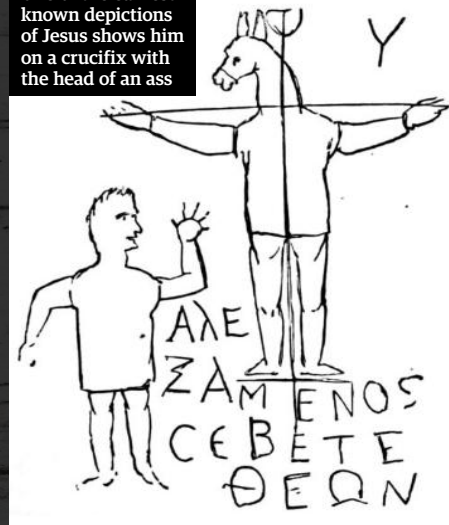
held up so much tedious graffiti that I am amazed that you have not already collapsed in ruin."

Interestingly, one of the earliest known and possibly most controversial depictions of Jesus was found in a Roman graffiti. In 1857, an image scratched in plaster was discovered on the Palatine Hill. Called the Alexamenos Graffito, it shows a Roman soldier with his hand raised to a crucified figure, with a Greek caption reading, "Alexamenos worships his God." Not so shocking, you might think, but the person on the cross has the head of a donkey. It has been tentatively dated to around 200 CE, a time when Christians were still being actively persecuted.

Roman walls were often home to advertisements



One of the earliest known depictions of Jesus shows him on a crucifix with the head of an ass



The graffiti of 10th-century bishops on a Roman cornice



A Christian graffito of Saint Peter from the 1st century



Graffiti through the Ages

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF VIKINGS

Maeshowe Chambered Cairn on Orkney is a Neolithic burial chamber that was erected almost 5,000 years ago. The *Orkneyinga Saga* tells of how Viking settlers broke into the prehistoric cairn in search of treasure 1,000 years ago and left a trove of runic inscriptions behind them that can still be seen today. Some follow the pattern of most graffiti – “Ottarfila carved these runes” – while others make reference to the treasure mentioned in the saga.

The Scottish cairn wasn't an isolated incident. From the 10th to the 14th centuries, Norse soldiers

served as the personal guard of the Byzantine emperors because they were valued for their ferocity in combat and devout loyalty to their employer. They also brought their tendency to vandalise the property of others as well. In the basilica of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople there are two short runic graffiti, almost indecipherably worn away, but in Athens a longer inscription was set down.

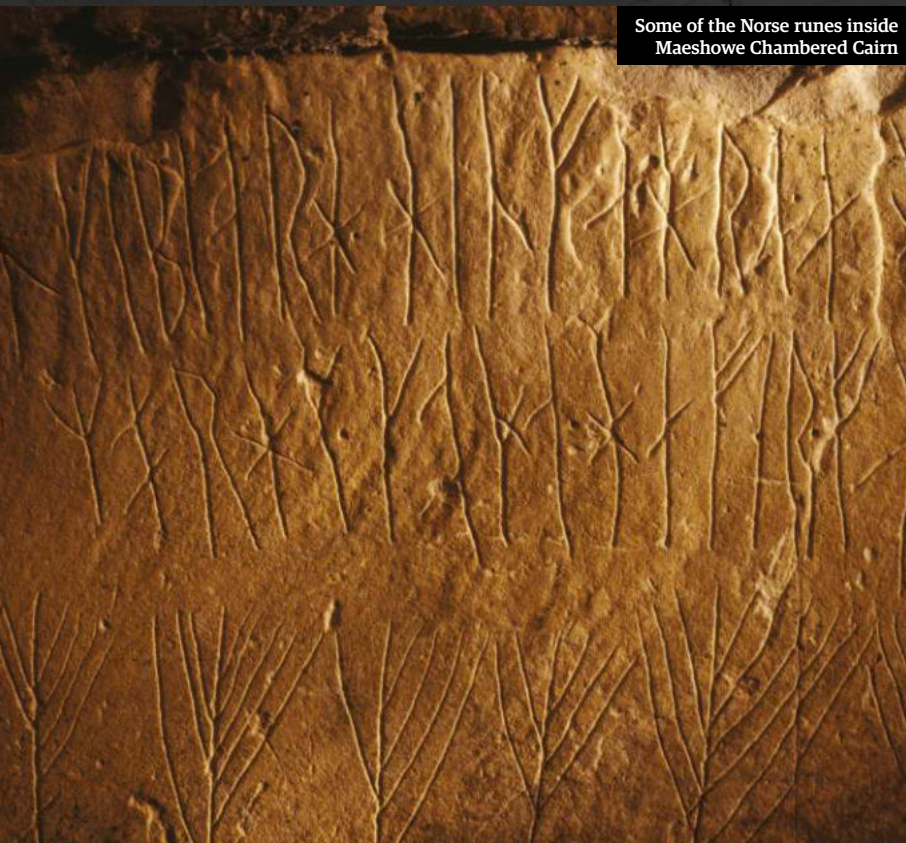
At the city's port of Piraeus, a white marble lion statue was set up in the 1st century CE. So famous was this lion that the whole port came to be known as Porto Leone. At some point, a Norse

guard decided this famous landmark needed some extra decoration. Both of the lion's flanks bear runes carved in a lindworm, or dragon, pattern. Increasingly weathered over the centuries, the inscriptions are difficult to make out, but translations have been made:

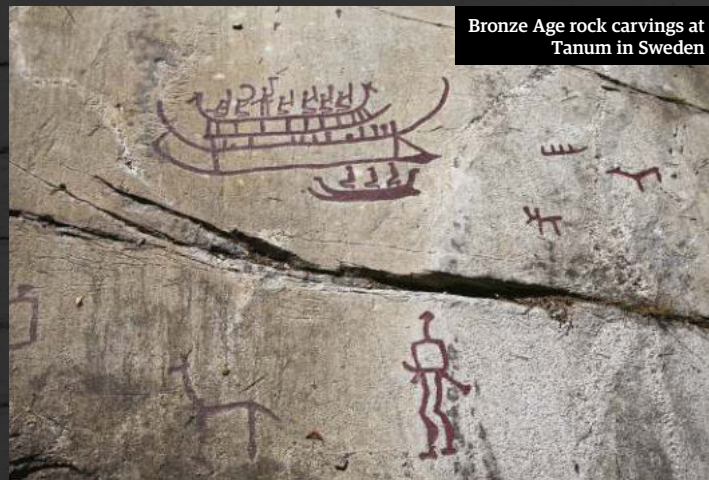
“They cut him down in the midst of his forces. But in the harbour the men cut runes by the sea in memory of Horsí, a good warrior. The Swedes set this on the lion. He went his way with good counsel, gold he won in his travels. The warriors cut runes, hewed them in an ornamental scroll...”



A grafitto of a Viking longboat on a whetstone from either the 9th or 10th century

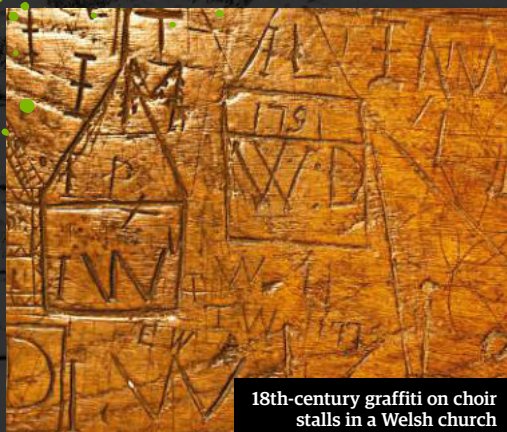


Some of the Norse runes inside Maeshowe Chambered Cairn



Bronze Age rock carvings at Tanum in Sweden

“WAS SUCH BEHAVIOUR WINKED AT BY THE AUTHORITIES?”



18th-century graffiti on choir stalls in a Welsh church

DEFACING THE CHURCH

Even the sacrilegious notion of defacing a holy site did not keep churches safe from the wandering hands of graffiti artists. Church graffiti tends to fall into a few set types — perhaps the most common, as in all periods, is simply the name of the person writing the graffiti. Pilgrims sometimes wanted to leave a reminder of themselves at a holy place — a name, or just initials, was perhaps all a graffiti artist had time to set down.

Others seem to have had no such temporal worries. One of the startling things about church graffiti is often the complexity of the art: works of heraldry, fully rigged ships, ornate crosses, musical notation and figurative images of demons, people and saints can all be found in churches. Was security much more lax in the past, or was such behaviour winked at by the authorities?

Names scratched on a church pew in Dorset, England

Other church graffiti serves a more obvious devotional purpose. Crosses left by visitors can be found in almost every church in Christendom. The double V sign, overlapping to look like a W, was shorthand for Virgo Virginum (Virgin of Virgins), a reference to the Virgin Mary. Other pieces of church graffiti could also be physical acts of prayer. A ship carved on a wall may have been a call for divine protection before a sea voyage. An image of a church containing initials may be a poor man's memorial, for those unable to afford a tomb.

Luckily for the guardians of churches today, visitors are much less likely to be carrying the correct tools for carving into stone. A pen or pencil in the pocket might leave a mess, but it would be one that is easily wiped clean. The graffiti artists of the Middle Ages would have had a knife with which to pick out their pattern. Two beautiful and common works of graffiti are the circle and the six-petal daisy wheel. These were made by a pair of compasses or shears — a biro just won't cut it.

HOW TO RECORD CHURCH GRAFFITI

Your local church might be hiding hidden treasures — here's what you need to find them

FIND YOUR CHURCH

Start by locating some churches in your local area. The older the church, the more chance there is that there will be interesting graffiti to be found, so be sure to ask for the building's age as well as permission to poke around the pews.



GATHER EQUIPMENT

To become a graffiti hunter, having the right equipment is key as, once you discover some, it'll need to be recorded. You will need a camera, a ruler, a pocket torch and a notepad and pen.



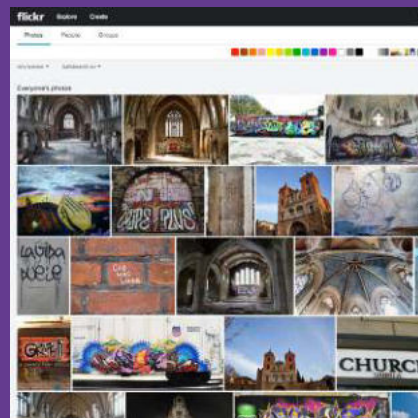
LOCATE GRAFFITI

Graffiti can be found anywhere, so keep your eyes peeled. Look for old stonework, pillars, doorways and fonts as these were often targeted. Please be respectful of your surroundings — churches are places of worship as well as historical interest.



RECORD IT

Scratched graffiti may be hard to make out, but a torch held at a raking angle can help by creating shadows. Place a ruler beside the graffiti to show the scale. Make sure to note down its location in your notebook and be sure to share your discoveries for other researchers to see.



Graffiti through the Ages



Cell block scribbles from a 19th century French penal colony

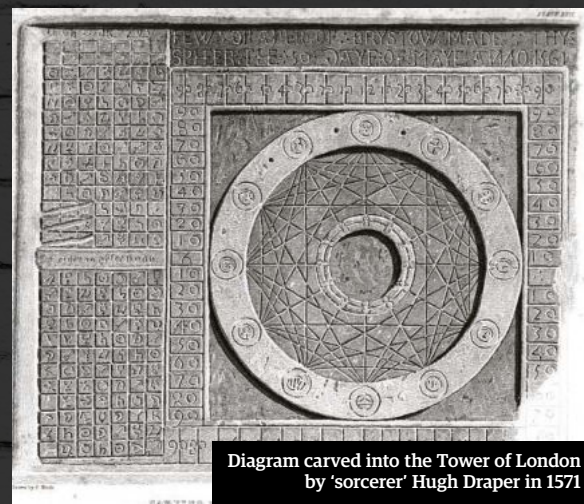
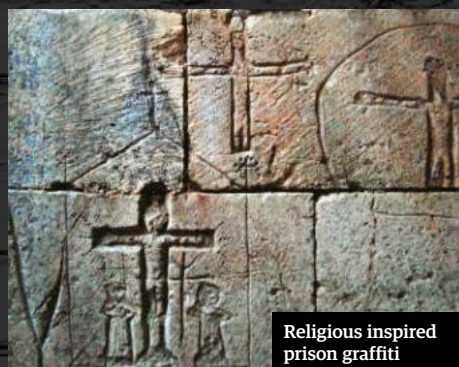


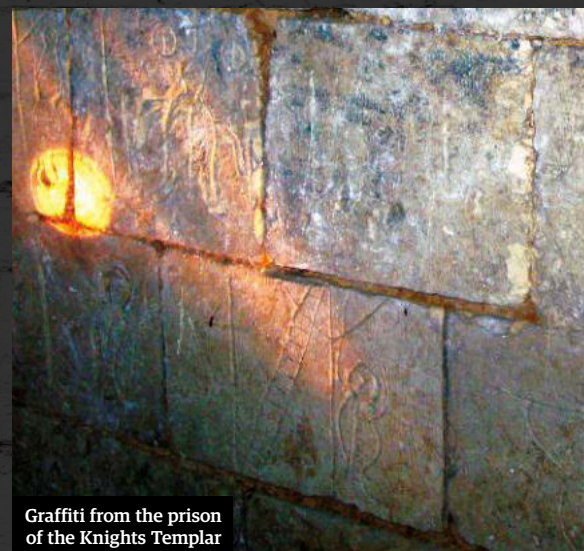
Diagram carved into the Tower of London by 'sorcerer' Hugh Draper in 1571



Detailed graffiti on the wall of a former prison



Religious inspired prison graffiti



Graffiti from the prison of the Knights Templar

GRAFFITI BEHIND BARS

Graffiti might be described as a voice for the voiceless. When you have no power, even over your own life, then setting something in stone, something permanent, must seem very tempting. No one is more powerless than a prisoner and it is unsurprising that we can find a considerable amount of graffiti in cells. Given that detainees have so much time on their hands, it tends to also be some of the most intricate graffiti.

Even the mightiest of subjects could turn to graffiti when faced with incarceration. We are told that the future queen Elizabeth I wrote on a windowpane with a diamond while held at Woodstock in the 1550s:

"Much suspected by me,
Nothing proved can be,
Quoth Elizabeth prisoner."

Others around Elizabeth would be captured, too. Her Italian tutor, Giovanni Battista Castiglione, was held in the Tower of London for passing letters to the princess. He left an E enclosed in a heart carved on his cell wall, showing his devotion was unbroken. Other

prisoners left graffiti testaments of conditions in the Tower. "For God's sake rid me of this dungeon, for I lie sore pained with the stone, among newts and spiders. I do all things in the place I lie."

Despite her personal knowledge of the pains of forcible detention, Elizabeth would still send others to the Tower as queen. Jesuit priests were seen as treasonous and locked up when caught, and there they left symbols of their faith. IHS (the Latinised version of Jesus' initials), crosses, a pierced heart, and the bleeding palms and feet of Christ were all scratched into the walls. The earl of Arundel, held for his Catholicism, wrote over the fireplace in his cell: "The more affliction we endure for Christ in this world, the more glory we shall obtain with Christ in the next."

One of the most elaborate graffiti designs in the Tower was left by Hew Draper, a man arrested on suspicion of sorcery and held for 14 months. While there he carved the zodiac, with the planetary influences over the days of the week. One has to wonder how a court would have interpreted this when trying him for witchcraft.

While the graffiti in the Tower of London is particularly elaborate, all places where people lack

freedom attract the practice. In the Museum of London is a cell from Wellclose Prison, preserved as it was in the 1750s, and the oak walls are covered floor to ceiling with graffiti.

Most of the prisoners were debtors, but they seem to have kept their spirits up by carving sayings such as, "The Cubards [sic] Empty To Our Sorrow But Hope It Will Be Full Tomorrow". Particularly poignant are the rudimentary sundials carved into the bricks of Victorian workhouses. How they must have stared at them to check if time was passing at all.

In the 20th century, some of the most terrible prison systems ever devised were created in the concentration camps and the gulags. Graffiti aimed at the thin-skinned dictators could be enough to find yourself in one of these hellish places from which return was nearly impossible. Facing obliteration, many sought the cold remembrance of graffiti to bear witness to their existence by writing their name on bricks and metal plates. Others held onto their rage at the situation. In the Vilna Ghetto, a Nazi Germany concentration camp in modern-day Lithuania, a Yiddish inscription simply reads "Revenge".

MODERN ART

Graffiti art proper, as opposed to simple written tags, really took off in the 1970s. In 1979, an exhibition in a Roman gallery introduced the concept of graffiti as art to the world at large. What had been a societal scourge began to turn up in galleries and people would pay money to own what they had previously scrubbed from their walls.

Now graffiti is in the eye of the beholder; despite the bankability of Banksy, council workers still sometimes scour his works from walls, unaware of what they are washing down the drain.

With money comes commercialisation. Companies pay talented graffiti artists to spray their message far and wide. But even this is no novelty. On the walls of Pompeii, one could find adverts for gladiator shows, brothels and property for rent all jostling for space. The human story, it seems, is one that will be always written on our walls.



Banksy's graffiti often gets political

A street mural in New York City



There have always been arguments about whether graffiti is art or vandalism



MAGIC MARKS

Graffiti sometimes had ritual uses. Apotropaic marks are used to ward off evil and have been found in churches, homes and even barns

SOLOMON'S KNOT

An intricate knot of lines, Solomon's knot has been depicted in Christian, Islamic and Jewish artwork. In Britain, it was believed that simple-minded demons would become trapped as they tried to follow the lines, rendering them harmless.



DAISY WHEEL

This mark sees circles incised with a compass to form a hexafoil pattern. One of the most common designs, it has many variants. Similar to Solomon's knot, the unbroken lines may have been thought to trap evil spirits.



TAPER MARKS

What at first glance look like accidental burn marks on building timbers are actually thought to be marks known as taper burns. These were sometimes deliberately scorched onto a beam with a flame before it was used in construction. This was thought to protect the building from fire and lightning.



DEMON TRAPS

Intricate, maze-like patterns were used to distract demons by making them lose their way. Examples have been found in chambers used by King James VI of Scotland, a strong believer in witchcraft.



PENTAGRAM

An ancient symbol that appears in both ancient Greece and Babylonia, the pentagram was thought to be particularly powerful against demons. Mephistopheles, a character in Goethe's *Faust*, is unable to cross a threshold marked with the pentagram.



© Photos courtesy of M. J. Champion

How to make... SHCHI

TRADITIONAL CABBAGE SOUP RUSSIA, 9TH CENTURY

Shchi is a traditional cabbage soup, often served as starter, and endures as one of Russia's most-loved dishes. Part of the reason shchi became so popular is that cabbages are a hardy crop that can grow strong in Russia's short summer seasons and survive cold temperatures. However, it's likely that, even before cabbage arrived in Russia from the Byzantine Empire, the broth was a popular staple, made with a similarly rugged vegetable like turnips.

As time went on, shchi was made over a pechka, a brick stove first introduced in the 15th century, which would take up about a quarter of a peasant's home and doubled as both a place to cook and a source of heat.

When making shchi, either fresh cabbage or Russian pickled cabbage, known as kislaya kapusta, can be used depending on the variety of shchi. Pickling was an excellent way of preserving crops throughout winter in Old Russia, and adds a salty, savoury flavour to the broth.

Ingredients

- 1.5 litres stock (meat or vegetable)
- 2 chicken breasts, cooked and shredded
- 1 white onion
- 2 carrots
- 2 celery stalks
- 1 potato
- 1/4 head of large fresh cabbage
- 1 large tomato
- Peppercorns, fresh dill, bay leaves, salt and pepper to season
- 1 tbs of unsalted butter
- Sour cream and rye bread to serve

METHOD

- 01** Begin your shchi by peeling and dicing the onion, carrots, celery stalks, potato and tomato as well coring and shredding the cabbage.
- 02** In a large saucepan, bring the stock to a boil — you can use any type of stock here!
- 03** Add the diced and shredded vegetables to the stock and let it boil for a few minutes.
- 04** Add in the herbs to your bubbling shchi, then simmer for 20-30 minutes until the potatoes and cabbage are tender.

- 05** Now you can add your shredded chicken and the butter to the soup. Let it simmer for a further five minutes.
- 06** For a different twist, you can use an equal amount of sauerkraut instead of fresh cabbage, and then mushrooms instead of tomatoes!
- 07** Get creative with your shchi. There is a huge array of additions that can be added to this soup. Some recipes add boiled eggs and shchi can also be made with a wide range of meats. Do some

research on Russian cuisine and test out some exquisite variations!

- 08** For a really tasty treat, you can make sutochnye shchi, or one-day shchi. To do this, just leave the soup in the fridge — the flavour is greatly enhanced and there are some stories that claim this is a remarkable hangover cure.
- 09** Serve your shchi with a dollop of sour cream and some rye bread and enjoy the traditional taste of Russia!

Did you know?

Ivan the Terrible, tsar of Russia from 1547 to 1584, supposedly once poured a bowlful of hot shchi on a boyar's head in a fit of rage

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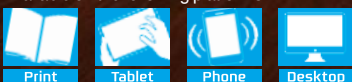


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DAN JONES VS THE TEMPLARS

The Knights Templar have been linked to everything from the Holy Grail to discovering America. But historian Dan Jones is on a quest to bust the myths surrounding these warrior monks

Interview by Dom Reseigh-Lincoln

For an organisation that shrouded itself in mystery, the Knights Templar are surprisingly well known. Perhaps the reason we still remember this order of medieval warrior monks – fixate on them, even – is because they wanted to keep their initiation rites and other practises top secret. Originally a holy order formed in the wake of the First Crusade, the Templars pledged to protect pilgrims travelling the long and dangerous roads to Jerusalem. However, in time this group – which swore oaths of chastity and poverty – became one of the richest and most influential branches of the Vatican. Both allies and enemies to many a king of the era, the Templars were an order that fought wars, operated banks and influenced more than their fair share of foreign policies for over 200 years.

However, the order's air of clandestine operation coupled with incredible power it wielded has fuelled numerous conspiracy theories down the years, most notably the legend of the Holy Grail. In turn, the Templars have made a convenient plot device to carry countless books, TV shows and video games. Now historian Dan Jones is on a mission to demystify the monks, following up his popular medieval chronicles *The Plantagenets* and *The Hollow Crown*, with new book, *The Templars: The Rise and Spectacular Fall of God's Holy Warriors*. **All About History** spoke with Jones to separate fact from fiction.

What was it about the Knights Templar and its mysterious practices that drew you in as a historian?

For me, it's one of those few subjects that has instant name recognition. If you ask anyone to name something from the Middle Ages there's a good chance it's going to be the Templars. You can't say that for many subjects, and certainly not for many monarchs, except perhaps Richard the Lionheart or Richard III. It also has pop culture resonance through *The Da Vinci Code*, the *Assassin's Creed* video games, *Ivanhoe*, *Indiana Jones* and this new TV show called *Knightfall* [coming to the History Channel soon].

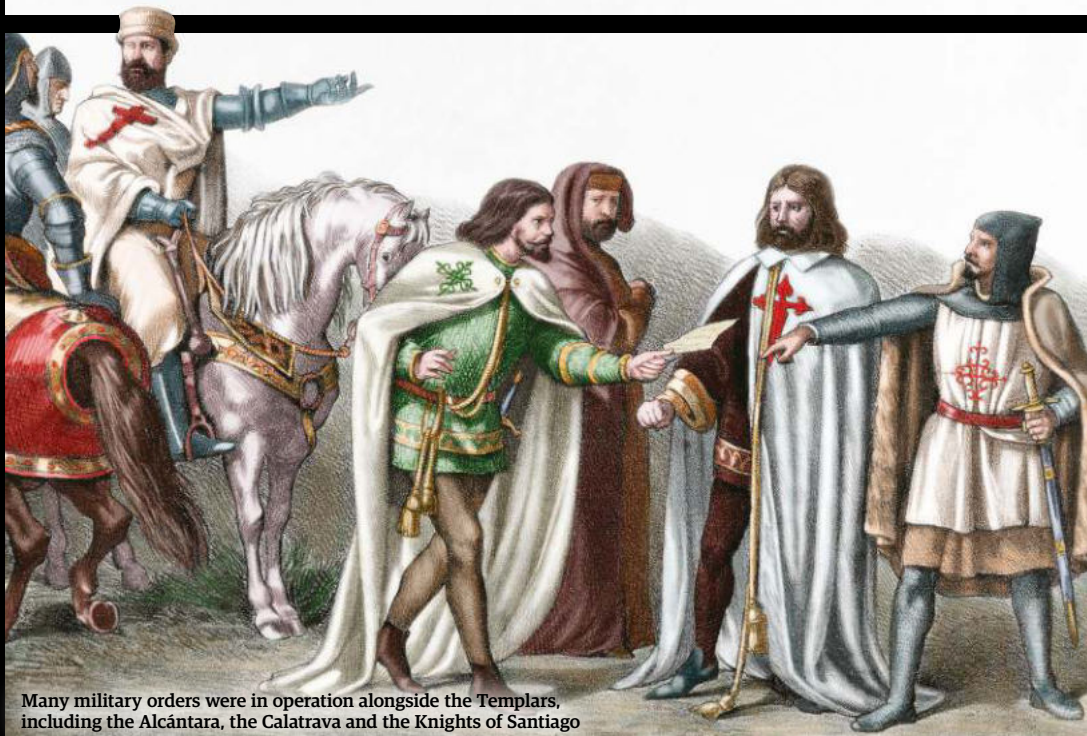
There's also all this mystery connecting them to the Holy Grail, so there's a rich grounding for a historian to peel away the myths and uncover the real story that lies beneath. Of course, we know that the Holy Grail didn't exist – it's an absurd idea – so there are these mysteries and legends waiting to be siphoned away to reveal the truth about the Knights Templar.

How did the Templars make the jump from oaths of poverty to becoming one of the richest military orders?

Interestingly, the very first Templars were actually very wealthy, well-connected people. Yes, the first Templars swore oaths of chastity and poverty, but the only people that need to swear an oath of poverty are those who aren't poor to begin with.

“IT’S ONE OF
THOSE FEW
SUBJECTS
THAT HAS
INSTANT NAME
RECOGNITION”

Bad boy of history,
Dan Jones wants to
challenge everything
you think you know
about the Templars



Many military orders were in operation alongside the Templars, including the Alcántara, the Calatrava and the Knights of Santiago

The Knights Templar, along with many other military orders, became the engine that drove and maintained European control over the Holy Land



Jacques de Molay, the last of the order's Grand Masters, helped contribute to its downfall with his lack of political saviness



The Temple Church in London was one of the key headquarters for the Knights Templar in England and was used for initiation ceremonies

So in the very first years of the Templars, this idea came about of forming a pilgrim bodyguard, between 1119 and 1120. They're able to take this concept with apparent ease to the king of Jerusalem, who immediately agrees to help fund it. So that's your first sign that these people are immensely well connected.

Then, in about 1126, the first Grand Master, Hugues de Payens, heads up a recruitment and fundraising tour across Europe. He crops up in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* asking Henry I if he can pop over to England and do some fundraising there. He's receiving donations from Queen Matilda. In fact, their first great sponsor was Bernard of Clairvaux, the great reforming abbot of his day.

The Templars coupled the taste for reforming monasticism and the trend for new orders with the fact that the crusades were still popular at the time. It created a golden combination of powerful patronage from on high and strong support from below with the general public.

Did these monastic warriors really pioneer financial principles that we still use today?

This is one of the slight myths surrounding the Templars – that they were the world's first bankers and that no one before them had even thought about wealth transfer and other financial concepts, which isn't quite the case.

“THE LAST GRAND MASTER, JACQUES DE MOLAY, WAS NOT CAPABLE”

A better way to describe the Templars' sphere of business in modern terms would be as a financial service. Because they had such a vast and wide network of property, which was sanctified and well defended in many cases, they had access to a large repository. One could place their valuables with the Templar while they went off to the Crusades and protect their wealth in the meantime.

In 1215, even King John was using New Temple in London to hold his wealth and keep his royal coffers safe in the event of crisis, so we get the impression that the Templars were considered a very safe choice for people of the day. The Templars were, much like many financial institutions of today, offering lots of different services. For instance, they were running the accountancy and auditing processes of the French government of the early 1100s and beyond.

It certainly doesn't sound very sexy, but in Paris they were effectively the Royal Treasury of France. The Templars were even collecting crusading taxes for Pope Innocent III during the

Fifth Crusade, mainly because he didn't want such large amounts of money passing through the Vatican.

How did the myths surrounding the Templar's initiation ceremonies contribute to its eventual demise?

Well, we know a lot about these practices because we have copies of the French and Catalan Rules of the Templars, which describe the long and elaborate initiation processes that they used. These practices required the prospective member to present himself before his fellow Templars and be inducted into the order with the 'Kiss of Peace'. There was nothing untoward about this element of the ceremony until you get to around 1306 and King Philip IV of France's campaign to disassemble the Knights Templar.

At this point, an evidence-gathering process begins, which in modern politics would be known as 'opposition research'. These people were looking for anything that could be used against the

BUSTING THE TEMPLAR MYTHS

Uncover the truth behind some of the tall tales surrounding the order

The Holy Grail

Arguably the most famous and enduring legend tied to the myths of the Knights Templar, the Holy Grail is believed to be the cup that Jesus Christ drank from at the Last Supper. In reality, it's likely that no such vessel exists and is instead an analogue for the Templars themselves.



The 12 who escaped

In October 1307, King Philip IV organised a mass arrest of Templars across the continent. Most were imprisoned or executed, but a document discovered in a French archive confirmed that 12 of its key figures escaped. Some myths suggest these 12 form part of the grail legend, but they probably just disappeared into anonymity.



The skulls beneath Luz

Another myth that ties into those fabled 12 Templar escapees, and one that potentially reveals their fate, leads us beneath a temple in the French region of Luz, where 12 skulls were discovered. However, a number of temples have been found in the area so such a theory is reaching at best.



The Templars discovered America

According to one Venetian manuscript written in 1558, the Templars arrived in the New World in 1380. Considering the theory relies on one document written two centuries after the death of the order, and no other evidence has been uncovered on American soil, it's been heavily criticised by historians.



Templars aided the Scots

Another myth centres around a group of knights who secretly helped the Scots repel the armies of England at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. No evidence for such a presence exists, but rumoured reports at the time that state an unknown group of warriors aided the Scots.



Considering many Templars were both influential figures and monastic knights, they were often entombed in key locations such as here at Temple Church, London



The Temple Mount, located in Jerusalem, was the first headquarters of the order. It was this location that inspired the name 'Templars'

Templars, but the researchers found very little – we can see this from the records of the Templars' trials in 1307.

Even with all the forced admissions extracted by torture, you get this overwhelming sense of 'Is that all you've got?' Philip's case against the Templars had three main points: worshipping idols, spitting on the cross and that the Templars had been kissing one another in their induction ceremonies. It's clear this is an attempt to sex up the vernacular of the Templar induction process.

What's absurd is that this accusation is being levelled by the king of France, a man who would have taken feudal homage from hundreds of people over his reign, all of whom would have been granted the Kiss of Peace. It's very cynical. It's basically the 'fake news' of its era.

Of all the monastic orders in the Middle Ages, why were the Knights Templar singled out for persecution?

Around the time of the final crusade, calls had begun for the reform of the military orders including the Hospitallers, the Teutonic Knights and the Templars. By around 1290, these orders were essentially holding the fort for the European powers in the region.

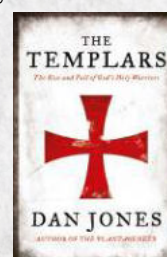
It was a valiant effort, but it also meant they copped a lot of the blame when the last bastion of Acre fell in 1291. From this point on, we start

to hear a call for the Templars and all the other smaller orders to be combined into one 'super order', which would then, presumably, be used to retake the Holy Land.

Then you come to a matter of personality. The last Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, was not capable of coping with his position. He was the wrong person and was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Molay, between 1306, prior to the mass arrests of the Templars, and 1314, when he was burned at the stake along with his fellow knights, made a constant stream of mistakes that left the order open to political assault from Philip IV.

There was also a closeness between the kingdom of France and the Templars stretching back generations, which effectively made the order an easy target for the French king. Add to that his desire to potentially roll the orders together and lead it into a new crusade and his ongoing rivalry with the pope and you have an ideal way for Philip IV to weaken the papacy by proxy.

The Templars: The Rise and Spectacular Fall of God's Holy Warriors by Dan Jones is available to buy in hardback for £25. To hear more from Dan, you can follow him on Twitter @dgjones.



REVIEWS

All About History on the books, TV shows and
films causing a stir in the history world

CENSORED: A LITERARY HISTORY OF SUBVERSION AND CONTROL

How to ban a book – from Wycliff to the web

Author Matthew Fellion and Katherine Inglis

Publisher British Library **Price** £25 **Released** 28 September

In 1748, John Cleland wrote the infamous erotic novel *Fanny Hill: Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* while in debtors' prison, owing an especially forbidding £800 to one Thomas Cannon. The bawdy tale became a huge popular success and got Cleland into a heap of trouble, charged with 'corrupting the king's subjects'. But all was not lost: in correspondence with the secretary of state's law clerk, Cleland was able to alert him to the publication of *Ancient and Modern Pederasty*, a pamphlet defending homosexuality by none other than Thomas Cannon.

Clearly revenge is sweet in the world of 18th century obscenity, and so is Matthew Fellion and Katherine Inglis' account of it. *Censorship*, which appropriately goes on sale during Banned Books Week, explores 25 significant cases of literary suppression. The authors have brilliantly succeeded in explaining the complex history of censorship without getting bogged down in legalese or dumbing their account down to merely salacious titbits of what the butler wasn't supposed to see.

The Cleland chapter is a case in point: as well as detailing the creation of *Fanny Hill*, the authors zoom through the 1727 case that established the publication of obscenity as a criminal offence in English common law, US Supreme Court rulings and how the assumed 'incorruptibility' of the British police provided a legal loophole. All this scholarly learning is presented with a wonderfully light touch.

The scope of *Censorship* is broad. It begins in the 1380s with the suppression

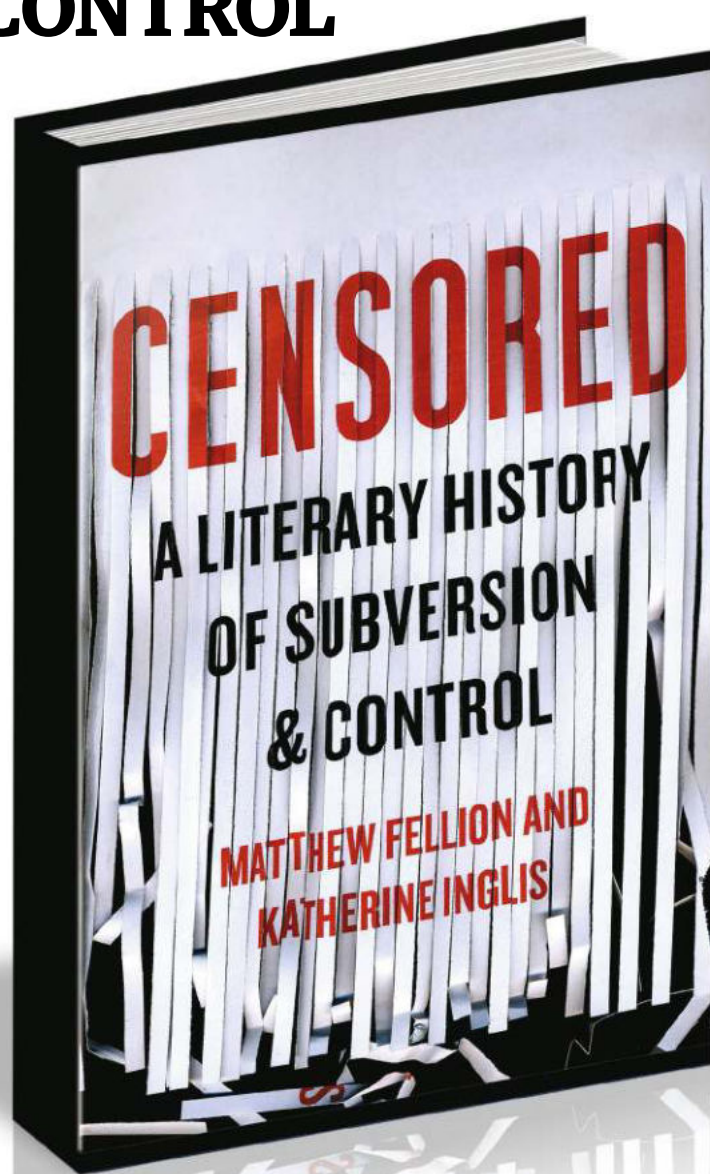
of translations of the Bible into English and does not limit itself to canonical literature. Here you'll find comics (issue 14 of *Shock SuspenStories*), graphic novels (Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*) and magazines (*OZ 28: The School Kids Issue*). Nonfiction is also included in the form of Rex Feral's *Hit Man: A Technical Manual for Independent Contractors*. This provided the modus operandi for an actual triple murder but had actually been written under a pseudonym by a divorced mother of two from Florida in the United States.

Notorious causes célèbres such as *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Ulysses* and Salman Rushdie's fatwa are given incisive coverage, but the authors also give plenty of space for the fight for gay and indigenous rights, the vexed issue of prison censorship and self-censorship among early women writers.

The multiple layers of censorship of slave narratives are explained through the story of Mary Prince, who had her memoir bowdlerised by her publisher before having to defend herself in court against anti-abolitionists who accused her of dishonesty.

Each chapter is entirely self-contained, which makes it easy to dip into sections on particular books, but when characters, cases and pieces of legislation crop up more than once, the reader is helpfully referred to significant appearances elsewhere.

The cumulative effect of Fellion and Katherine Inglis' *Censorship* is a rewardingly nuanced and thoroughly compelling view of how the censorship of literature has developed over time.



"Clearly revenge is sweet in the world of 18th century obscenity, and so is Matthew Fellion and Katherine Inglis' account of it"

ARMAGEDDON AND PARANOIA:

THE NUCLEAR CONFRONTATION

A lifetime on the brink

Author Rodric Braithwaite **Publisher** Profile Books **Price** £25 **Released** 21 September

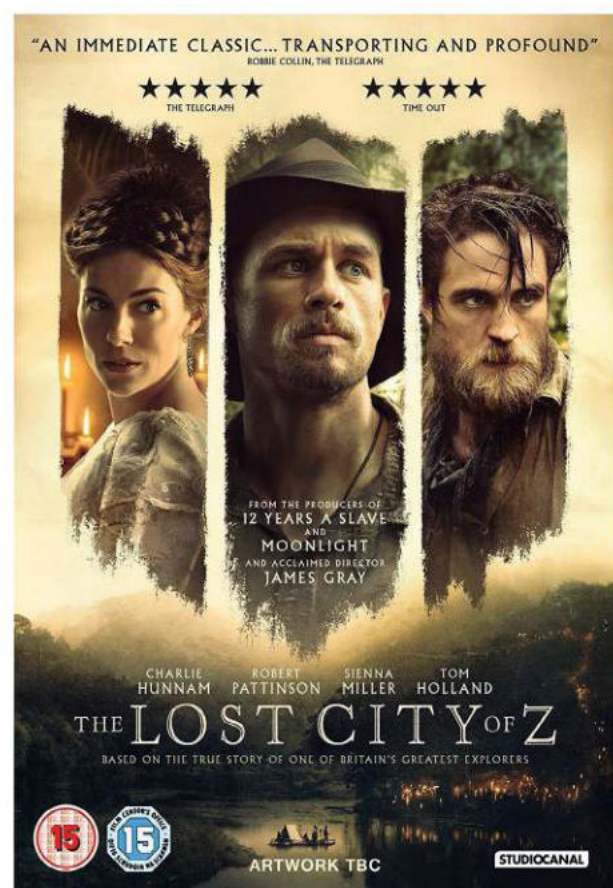
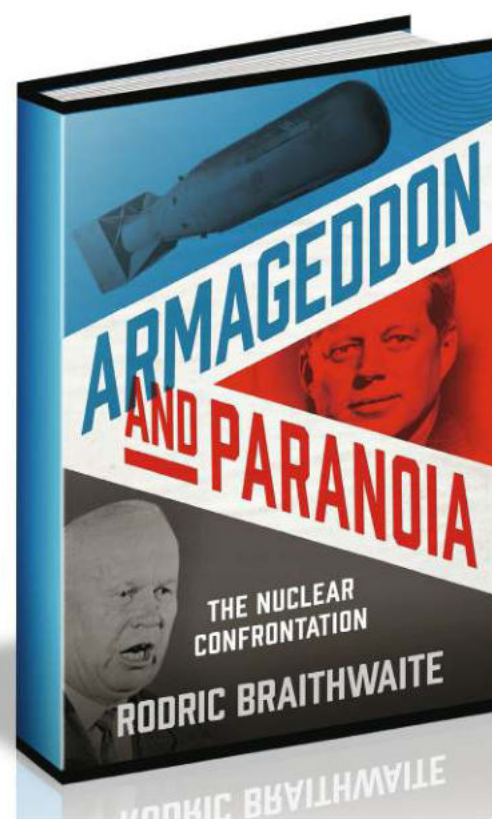
Rarely has a book release been as unnervingly timely as the publication of Rodric Braithwaite's *Armageddon and Paranoia*, which hits the shelves as tensions grow between the United States and the newly nuclear-capable North Korea. However, Braithwaite's book points out that the current crisis is just the latest in a string of nuclear confrontations over the last 70 years.

In *Armageddon and Paranoia*, Braithwaite masterfully crafts an intricate history of the nuclear arms race. The birth of this atomic age is described in some detail, from Project Manhattan's work during World War II to the bomb's devastating use in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But the author also looks at the nuke's subsequent proliferation throughout the Cold War and present-day stockpiling. As you might expect from the story of the world's most powerful weapon, Braithwaite's biography of the A-bomb is an enthralling read right from the first page.

Braithwaite, who was a British diplomat in Russia during the Soviet Union's collapse, also imbues his in-depth history with critical insight that should re-conceptualise 20th-century politics for any reader. Most shocking of all, Braithwaite shows that nuclear proliferation was mainly a series of high-level knee-jerk reactions, driven by fear as much as strategy, with few questions asked by high-ranking officials along the way.

Dealing in hard facts as well as mediating on the cultural impact of the atomic age, Braithwaite skilfully articulates how the advent of the nuclear bomb embodied humanity's fears and anxieties like nothing before.

We can highly recommend that President Trump and Chairman Kim Jung-un add *Armageddon and Paranoia* to their reading lists. The same goes for anyone else who is interested in the development of nuclear weapons, their geopolitical effects and how they have shaped the culture of the world we live in today.



THE LOST CITY OF Z

This existential quest for El Dorado is cinematic gold

Certificate 15 **Director** James Gray **Cast** Charlie Hunnam, Sienna Miller, Tom Holland, Robert Pattinson **Released** Out now

The disappearance of explorer Percy Fawcett in the Amazon in 1925 has fascinated would-be adventurers for almost a century. This would seem to include writer and director James Gray.

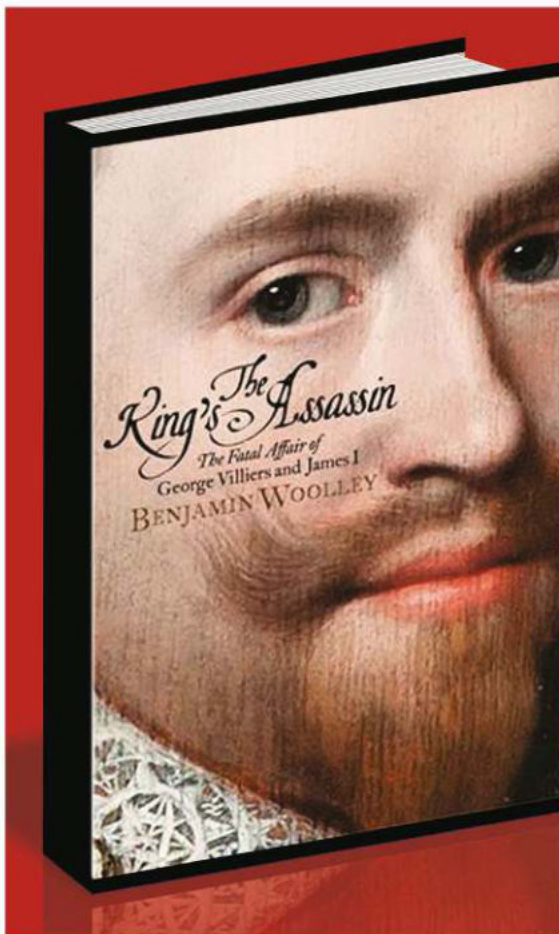
Gray's lyrical epic *The Lost City of Z* stars Charlie Hunnam as Fawcett, a man who wishes to withdraw from the strict social mores and wartime horrors of early 20th-century Europe. He searches the jungle for an ancient city and, just possibly, redemption – for both himself and humanity. Sienna Miller plays Fawcett's faithful wife and Tom Holland is his son, who joins his quest.

Deeply introspective and with anti-imperial themes, *The Lost City of Z* is reminiscent of Joseph Conrad's 1899 novel *Heart of Darkness* but manages to avoid the well-tread story of the western adventurer succumbing to his own savagery. Instead, it devotes almost as much of the movie to Fawcett's increasingly alienated life back in Blighty as it does his

expeditions in the Amazon and serves up a much more mysterious ending.

Gray has liberally adapted *The Lost City of Z* from David Grann's book of the same name, published in 2009, which itself took a very liberal approach to facts. As this is a history magazine, we feel compelled to point out that Fawcett is a deeply romanticised character and his contribution to exploration is greatly overstated in this film. It's also unlikely that the city of Z actually ever existed, with the scant physical proof that Fawcett ever offered having been widely debunked over time.

On this latter point, *The Lost City of Z* is ambiguous but, as a vivid allegory for transcendent obsession, the question of whether or not Z is real or fictional is largely irrelevant. It's probably also worth mentioning that Gray's erudite audio commentary makes up for the disappointing lack of extras that come with the film.



THE KING'S ASSASSIN:

THE FATAL AFFAIR OF GEORGE VILLIERS AND JAMES I

Could the gallant courtier James I called 'wife' have poisoned him?

Author Benjamin Woolley Publisher Macmillan Price £20 Released Out now

George Villiers transcended his minor background to become the duke of Buckingham by enrapturing James I. He was always at the king's side at court, on state occasions and even in his bedroom.

In 1615, Villiers was appointed gentleman of the bedchamber, meaning he helped the king dress, waited on him while he ate in private and more. So intense was James' adoration for Villiers that he declared he wanted him to become his 'wife'. But in *The King's Assassin*, Benjamin Woolley claims the court favourite may have actually killed James.

Woolley acknowledges that this theory has been rejected by many historians in the past but nonetheless presents a plausible case in its favour. He shares the suspicions of contemporary members of parliament who led an investigation into the king's death and the thoughts of a modern medical expert as to the poison likely administered to James during

treatments used while he was bedbound with a fever. The author argues that Villiers either accidentally killed the king or murdered him as part of a plot to replace James' distemperate, chaotic leadership.

While this conspiracy is at the heart of *The King's Assassin*, the biography also charts Villiers' early life and meteoric rise as well as exploring the man's easy charm, which wooed so many, and his scheming, which alienated many more.

Woolley also paints a vivid picture of the Jacobean court, drawing from sources including contemporary ambassador reports, couriers' letters and parliamentary proceedings, capturing not only the very real flaws of the somewhat unlikeable Buckingham but also the deepening fractures between Crown and Parliament, which would come to a head with the English Civil War during the reign of James' successor, Charles I.

HISTORY WAR RECOMMENDS...

**Heroes of Jadotville:
The Soldiers' Story**

Author: Rose Doyle **Price:** £15.95
Publisher: New Island Books



This compelling account tells the story of 156 Irish UN peacekeepers during the 1961 Congo Crisis. The book details how the peacekeepers

were isolated, without water, supplies or support when they were attacked and forced to defend themselves in a brutal and bloody five-day battle with thousands of Katangan rebels and mercenaries. This fascinating account draws on substantial interviews with the men, plus their reports, journals and letters.

THE 50 GREATEST PREHISTORIC SITES IN THE WORLD

Take a walking tour through humankind's deep past

Author Barry Stone Publisher Icon Books Price £8.99 Released Out now

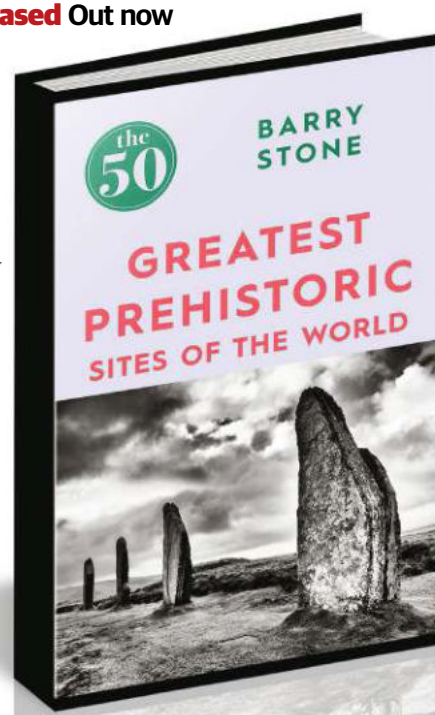
There are two things writer Barry Stone seems to particularly love: walking and list-making. His latest outing gives his special brand of sauntering countdowns a prehistoric slant, exploring standing stones and other ancient sites.

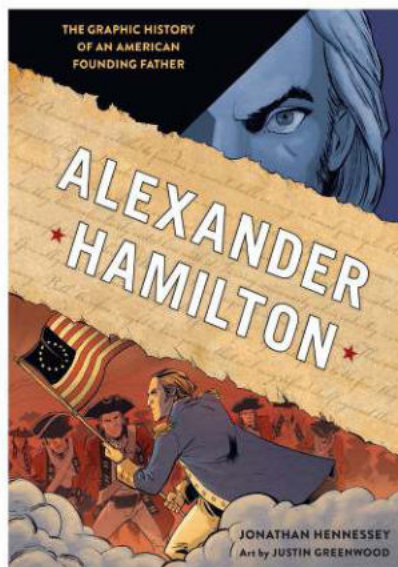
The 50 Greatest Prehistoric Sites in the World takes us on a globe-trotting tour from the Middle Bronze Age settlement of Arkaim on the Kazakh Steppe to the temples of the Olmec in Mexico.

Stone includes the big names you might expect, from Stonehenge to the Crucible of Iron Age Shetland and the carved heads of Easter Island. But while the author does enthusiastically stress why these sites are important, he doesn't offer any deep insight into their history or the societies that built them.

Perhaps as a means to justify their ranking on his list, he actually goes into more depth on the ancient sites you may not have heard of. A great example of this how he explores Wrangel Island in East Siberia, where a fascinating discovery debunked theories about when and how woolly mammoths ceased to exist. Over the course of the chapter, Stone skilfully pieces together the puzzle, linking this discovery with conclusions drawn from previous digs and provides a complex story of the mammoth's road to extinction.

Entries like this are written with knowledge and passion and are what makes Stone's guide an absolute must-read for prehistory lovers. There are many eye-opening discoveries unearthed throughout the pages that take us on an insightful walking tour.





ALEXANDER HAMILTON:

THE GRAPHIC HISTORY OF AN AMERICAN FOUNDING FATHER

Discover the man behind the musical

Author Jonathan Hennessey **Artist** Justin Greenwood

Publisher Ten Speed Press **Price** £15.53 **Released** Out now

The multifarious and turbulent life of Alexander Hamilton has been turned into one of the most successful stage musicals of recent years. This graphic novel is a far cry from that production's energetic hip-hop inflections. It's a fairly dry biography of one of America's founding fathers that manages to enumerate Hamilton's accomplishments and flaws without really bringing its subject to life.

The opening chapters are, frankly, all over the place. Jonathan Hennessey's script takes a couple of dozen pages to settle down and tell its story. There are digressions, flashbacks, infodumps and even a recurring fantasy sequence that draws tenuous allegorical parallels between the American fight for independence and Adam's struggles with the serpent in the Garden of Eden.

Once the background detail has been sketched in, the narrative becomes both

linear and clearer. We follow Hamilton from his humble beginnings as the orphaned son of a Scottish tobacco agent in the Caribbean to his time as a pamphleteer, his service in the Revolutionary War, his ascent to political high office, his fall from grace and eventually his death in a duel.

All of this is told in wordy, factual captions and chunks of authentic-sounding dialogue, accompanied by decent, loose-lined art from Justin Greenwood that manages to illustrate, if not exactly illuminate, the text. Greenwood seems able to draw only one kind of face so his characters are hard to tell apart, but his use of colour is strong and his page composition never less than interesting.

There is no question that Hamilton was an extraordinary man who, in overcoming all the odds to rise from obscurity, seems an early epitome of the American Dream. If only this book were as extraordinary.



WATLING STREET: TRAVELS THROUGH BRITAIN AND ITS EVER-PRESENT PAST

The myths and legends of Brexit Britain

Author John Higgs **Publisher** Weidenfeld & Nicolson **Price** £18.99 **Released** Out now

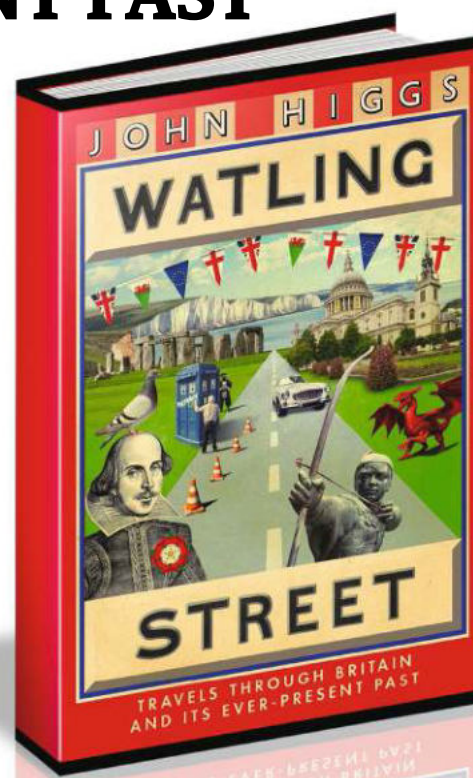
Stretching from the white cliffs of Dover to the Welsh isle of Anglesey, Watling Street is an ancient road. Down the ages and along its 444-kilometre length, Roman armies have marched, Boudicca met her end, the Battle of Bosworth changed royal history and Bletchley Park code breakers cracked Nazi transmissions. While the road is almost forgotten, the route still snakes through Middle England's market towns and forms the backbone of some of the country's major highways, including the A2, A5 and M6 Toll.

Writer John Higgs journeys along the length of this main artery of British culture in his new travelogue. While a lesser work of popular history might just use this road trip as a means to just recount stories of Britain's past, *Watling Street* is more interested in Britain's relationship with its past. This leads the author to some interesting conclusions. For example, he links highwaymen like Dick Turpin with the modern 'gig economy' of zero-hour contract workers.

To help him take on such an ambitious project, Higgs also ropes in avant-garde artists like Alan Moore and John Constable (the shamanic London poet, not the dead painter). These interviewees discuss Britishness in meditative, sometimes metaphysical terms.

But, while Higgs does use esoteric phrases like 'noosphere' to describe our relationship with culture, he counterbalances his high-minded ideas with a wry humour, so *Watling Street* doesn't feel like a university lecture. Sometimes, though, he does lose his way and his political broadsides against private education and land ownership feel like self-indulgent detours.

Smart, ambitious and iconoclastic, *Watling Street* challenges the stories the British tell themselves – from Robin Hood to the Blitz spirit – and puts them in their cultural context. But by tearing down the familiar Union Jack bunting and exploding old ideas of Britain's national identity, Higgs offers an alternative that will leave you with a newfound fondness for these isles.



HISTORY ANSWERS

Send your questions to questions@historyanswers.co.uk



The fight for Berlin in the final days of World War II resulted in some of the highest casualty figures in history

What was the world's bloodiest battle?

Lee Diaz

It's an intriguing question, but accurate figures for battle casualties don't really exist much before 1800. Without modern army unit formations, it is difficult to even be sure how many soldiers were on the field, let alone how many were killed or injured. Historical battlefield reports are usually estimates and they often lump together the numbers of killed, wounded and captured of both military and civilians in a variety of inconsistent ways that make it hard to compare.

Reports of ancient battles from contemporary sources generally have casualty numbers that are

hardly better than a wild guess. The Siege of Baghdad in 1258, for example, ended in a sack of the city where most of the civilian inhabitants were slaughtered, but the death toll varies from 200,000 to 2 million depending on if you accept Western or Arab sources.

There is also the question of what counts as a single battle. The Siege of Leningrad in World War II may have resulted in as many as 4.5 million casualties, but it also lasted nearly two and a half years! The Battle of Berlin, on the other hand, ran for just two weeks in April 1945 and killed more than 200,000, with another million wounded or captured.

Did the Tower of London really house a polar bear?

Kate McGee

Yes, and not just a polar bear — there were lions, tigers, monkeys, elephants, zebras, alligators and even kangaroos, too. Wild animals have been kept at the Tower of London since the 12th century and records from 1210 detail the wages of the royal lionkeepers. The polar bear dates back to 1252 and it was a gift for Henry III from King Haakon IV of Norway.

Sadly, most of the animals were kept in cramped cages and weren't fed the right food.

For example, the royal keepers assumed that elephants were carnivorous! But the polar bear was at least allowed to swim in the Thames and hunt for fish, albeit on a leash.

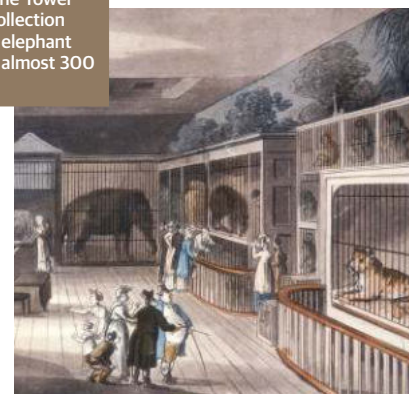
The Royal Menagerie was opened to the public in the 16th century. Visitors could avoid the three ha'penny admission fee by bringing a cat or dog to feed to the lions and tigers!

ALFRED COPS

Nationality: British
Born-died: ? - 1853

Brief Bio

Alfred Cops had previously been a showman at the menagerie at the Exeter Exchange on the Strand. In 1822, he pulled strings to become keeper of the Royal Menagerie at the Tower of London and the collection swelled from just an elephant and a brown bear to almost 300 different animals.



The Royal Menagerie was closed in 1835. The only animals there now are wire sculptures by Kendra Haste

This day in history 14 September

81 CE

Domitian becomes emperor

Domitian is the last Roman emperor of the Flavian dynasty. Second son of Vespasian, creator of the Colosseum, Domitian will rule for 15 years, until he is assassinated by court officials.



786

Night of the three caliphs

Harun al-Rashid becomes the fifth caliph of the Abbasid Caliphate on the death of his father. His son is born the same night, so three generations of caliphs are together for just this night.

1741

Handel's Messiah

George Frideric Handel completes his oratorio *Messiah*. It is in three parts, covering the birth, crucifixion and glorification of Jesus Christ. The music took just 24 days to compose.



1752

11 days disappear

The British Empire switches over to the Gregorian calendar. Since the old Julian calendar is still only on 3 September, the date skips forward 11 days. Catholic countries switched 170 years earlier.

Did the Romans really throw Christians to the lions?

Kristin Holloway

Yes, although it was much less common than early Christian writers have suggested. 'Damnatio ad bestias' (Latin for 'condemned to the beasts') was a sentence mostly used for army deserters and those guilty of treason. It was first used in the 2nd century BCE and some Christians were executed by wild animals under the reign of Nero.

By the 1st century CE, lions were getting expensive, so bears or wild boars were more commonly used. We only have one contemporary account that specifically mentions the use of lions against Christians and there is no evidence that were ever executed at the Colosseum in Rome.

St Ignatius of Antioch wrote circa 108 CE that he was due to be thrown to the beasts, but lions are not specifically mentioned until 4th-century writings



Since speed limits have existed, many have campaigned to bring them to their own towns



When did speed limits for roads first appear?

Joe McKenzie

The first limit that specified a particular speed was the 1861 Locomotive Act, which restricted vehicles to 10 miles per hour (16 kilometres an hour) on open roads and 5mph (3 km/h) in towns. But as far back as 1419, the first book of English Common Law, called the *Liber Albus*, forbade anyone from driving an empty cart faster than they would when it was loaded. The fine for doing this was 40 pence – about five days' wages for an ordinary labourer.



What happened to Wild West legend Calamity Jane's kids? Find out at historyanswers.co.uk

1814

Battle of Baltimore

Francis Scott Key witnesses the British Navy bombarding Baltimore during the War of 1812. His poem, *Defence of Fort M'Henry*, will later be used as the lyrics for the American national anthem.



1959

Russia reaches the Moon

The unmanned Soviet Luna 2 probe is deliberately crashed into the Moon at 10,863km/h, sending back scientific data during its descent. It is the first man-made object to reach the Moon.



1975

First American saint

Pope Paul VI canonises the first native-born US citizen. Elizabeth Ann Seton was born in 1774 in New York. She converted to Catholicism and founded a girls' school and later a religious community.

1984

Atlantic balloon crossing

Retired US Air Force colonel Joseph Kittinger sets off on what will become the first solo gas balloon flight across the Atlantic Ocean. The trip takes four days to cover 5,735 kilometres.



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Future Publishing Limited
Richmond House, 33 Richmond Hill
Bournemouth, Dorset, BH2 6EZ

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Cover images

Joe Cummings, Getty Images, Shutterstock

Photography and illustration

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01202 586200

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Printed by

Wyndeham Peterborough, Storey's Bar Road, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE1 5YS

Distributed by

Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU
www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9060

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ISSN 2052-5870

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Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR).
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HISTORY HOLLYWOOD

Fact versus fiction on the silver screen



THE DEATH OF LOUIS XIV

Director: Albert Serra **Starring:** Jean-Pierre Léaud, Patrick d'Assumção, Marc Susini, Bernard Belin, Irène Silvagni, Vícenç Altaíó **Country:** France/Spain/Portugal **Year:** 2016

In the claustrophobic splendour of Versailles, the Sun King wastes away — but is *The Death Of Louis XIV* style over substance?

VERDICT Meticulous, atmospheric and haunting. You can almost smell the gangrene!

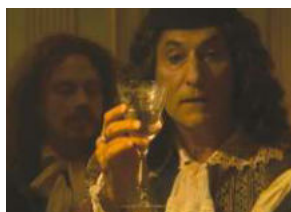
01 The 76-year-old King Louis XIV did experience the first symptoms of gangrene while hunting and, as the film suggests, languished for over a month in agony as his condition worsened. Meanwhile, around his deathbed, court life went on.

02 Just as the film depicts, Louis' trusted doctor refused to entertain a diagnosis of gangrene, even though the king showed all the symptoms. Even when the king's left leg turned black and the air grew thick with the stench, the doctor stuck to his guns.

03 One of the film's more eccentric characters is Le Brun, a quack who brings the king an elixir made from bull's semen and frog fat. Although this might seem too grotesque and outlandish to be true, Le Brun and his potion were quite real!

04 On the brink of death, Louis asks his doctors to ensure that his heart is removed and preserved. This rather Gothic touch is true, and the king's heart was mummified and kept at L'Église Saint-Paul-Saint-Louis until the French Revolution.

05 Fagon and the king were almost exactly the same age. In fact, Fagon was a few months older than Louis. In a rare departure from accuracy, the film shows Fagon as being the younger of the two, with Léaud (Louis) 19 years older than d'Assumção (Fagon).





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